

EFFECTS OF A STRUCTURED CLASSROOM GUIDANCE UNIT ON
SEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS' SELF-CONCEPTS
AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL

By

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents,
Hazel and Leroy Witt .

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by

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A nonrandomized pretest-posttest design was used to investigate the effects of a classroom guidance unit on seventh-grade students' self-concepts and attitudes toward school. Two intact, seventh-grade social studies classes from four middle schools participated. One classroom from each school served as an experimental group and the other served as a control group. Four middle school counselors received training and then presented the eight-session classroom guidance unit in their respective schools.

One hundred fifty-six seventh-grade students were pre- and posttested using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (P-HSCS) and 158 were similarly tested using the School Attitude Measure (SAM). The P-HSCS provided a general self-concept score and the SAM provided data on Motivation for Schooling (MS), Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept (PBASC), Reference-Based Academic Self-Concept (RBASC), Sense of Control Over Performance (SCOP), and Instructional Mastery (IM).

The differential effectiveness of this unit on the bases of group, gender, race, and school was explored. Twelve null hypotheses were tested. Data were analyzed using analyses of covariance.

No significant differences nor significant interaction effects ($P < .05$) were found for general self-concept. However, significant differences, but no significant interactions, were found for the MS scale on the bases of gender and school. A significant difference for the PBASC scale on the basis of gender, but no significant interaction effects, were found. No significant differences were found for the RBASC scale, but there was a significant group-by-gender interaction. A significant difference, but no significant interaction, on the basis of school was found for the SCOP scale. Significant differences were found for group and gender on the IM scale, but there were no significant interaction effects. The analyses also revealed significant differences among the covariates.

Although this study did not provide support that a classroom guidance unit is effective in improving seventh-grade students' self-concepts and attitudes toward school, a few effects were substantiated on the bases of students' characteristics. However, this study does point out the need for additional research in these areas.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

There is a need of staggering magnitude for doing something in our educational programs to help children and youth acquire realistic attitudes of self-acceptance. A large proportion of the young people now entering adulthood are burdened with anxiety, hostility, defensive attitudes towards themselves and others, feelings of guilt, inferiority, or other forms of disparagement and self-distrust. They struggle not only with the real danger and thwartings in our troubled world but with unresolved childhood problems. They are beset with conflicts arising from unrealistic concepts from childhood into adult life. (Jersild, 1952, p. 5)

Review of the current professional literature of the school counseling profession reveals that the words of Jersild are still applicable. Middle school counselors strive to help seventh-grade students (hereafter referred to as pre-adolescents) cope with problems such as poor academic achievement, test anxiety, family violence, divorce, peer pressure, drug and alcohol abuse, apathy, stress, truancy, teenage pregnancy, poor interpersonal relationships, vandalism, lack of motivation, depression, child abuse, dropping out of school, suicide, and other family and school pressures. Research indicates that many of these problems are influenced by children's self-perceptions. Beane (1986) pointed out that, "given the physical, social, and physical changes that occur at this stage, students face what could be considered a reconstruction of their self-concepts" (p. 189). He also stated that the "re-thinking of the self" related to these changes indicates a critical need for pre-adolescents. Beane

proposed that help and guidance of adults are needed in this process if the self-perceptions of pre-adolescents are to be accurate, realistic, and positive.

Middle school counselors can help nurture the growth of positive self-perceptions among pre-adolescents by helping them to acquire the skills necessary for the successful transition from childhood to adolescence. According to George (1986), the school effectiveness movement has had significant implications for the work of school counselors at all levels, and especially in middle and junior high schools. Further, he stated that "if schools are to become more effective they must become more affective and the school counselor is the person most likely to be successful in stimulating schools to move in this direction" (p. 183).

Because of their professional preparation, school counselors offer a special expertise in the development of children's self-concepts and self-esteem. One of the strategies middle school counselors use to maximize pre-adolescents' self-concept development is structured classroom group guidance experiences. In fact, the first major function for school counselors, as identified in the role statement developed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA Governing Board, 1981) is

structured developmental guidance experiences presented systematically through groups (including classrooms) to promote growth of psychological aspects of human development (e.g., ego, career, emotional, moral, and social development). Such interventions can logically become an integral part of such curriculum areas as social studies, language arts, health, or home economics. Individual or small group counseling is provided when the needs deserve more attention or privacy. (p. 9)

Gumaer (1986) noted that because school counselors are increasingly being required to provide more direct services to students, classroom group guidance provides school counselors with the greatest possible "direct contact" per student. Further, he suggested that it is the most cost-efficient form of direct school counselor intervention.

Middle school counselors cannot ignore the responsibility to help pre-adolescents develop healthy perceptions of themselves and positive attitudes toward learning. Thus, it is critical to search for and identify the most effective interventions to better meet the needs of these students.

Statement of the Problem

Pre-adolescence can be a "roller-coaster" time of life. This period of growth is characterized by rapid changes. It is also the most intense phase of development, bringing about more changes than any other time of life (Hankoff & Eisdler, 1979). Pre-adolescents are typically experiencing a multitude of changes and challenges, any of which can damage a "fragile" self-concept (Cangelosi, Bressard, & Mines, 1980). Physically, pre-adolescents are undergoing rapid changes in height, weight, and secondary sexual characteristics. Socially, they are confronted by pressures from peer groups, society, and family expectations. Pre-adolescents are at a point at which they must resolve the conflicts that arise in moving from childhood to adulthood. By the time children reach pre-adolescence, their self-concepts are well formed, and their reactions to learning, school failure and success, and the physical, social, and emotional climate

of the classroom will be determined by the beliefs and attitudes they have about themselves. Accordingly, one problem frequently encountered by middle school counselors is poor self-concept among pre-adolescents.

Stenner and Katzenmeyer (1976) stated that children's self-concepts crystallize during the early school years, and middle school counselors have a unique opportunity to aid in middle school curricula as one way of contributing to the emotional and personal development of children. However, even though such programs have been developed and implemented, empirical research regarding their effectiveness has been scarce.

Increasingly, more and more pre-adolescent children are experiencing learning and/or behavioral problems that affect scholastic achievement and influence the experiences they encounter in school settings. Because these experiences are influential in the formation of attitudes (Biehler, 1974), it follows that experiences at school will, in large part, determine the attitudes children develop toward learning and the school environment. School attitudes, in combination with school experiences, have been reported to figure prominently in children's self-evaluations (Jersild, 1952). As a component of the self-concept, these self-evaluations have been shown to be closely associated with academic achievement (e.g., Brookover, Thomas, & Patterson, 1964; Caplin, 1966; Coopersmith, 1967; Gill, 1969).

School achievement has also been found to be directly related to self-attitudes (i.e., self-concept). Self-attitudes, in turn, are

reported to be related to both school experiences and attitudes toward school (Jersild, 1952; Purkey, 1970).

Havighurst (1972) discussed developmental tasks and education and in his comments about attitude development in middle childhood, he wrote that the child is faced with the following tasks:

1. building wholesome attitudes toward self as a growing organism,
2. learning to get along with a peer group, and
3. developing attitudes toward institutions and social groups.

Combs (1962) stated that perhaps the single most important cause of a person's success or failure educationally has to do with the question of what one believes about oneself. He further pointed out that human intelligence can be created and that it is a function of the richness and the extent and availability of perceptions which are determined, in large part, by the self-concept. Combs contended that how one perceives oneself determines what things one is able to do and that determines, in turn, what one will try; therefore, the self-concept has a tremendous effect upon the capabilities of the individual. Thus, the attitudes of pre-adolescents play a major role in determining successes and failures in school. Therefore, it is important for middle school counselors to pay closer attention to the development of these self-attitudes.

If school is preparation for life, development of positive attitudes toward school and learning is as important as the transmittal of information and the development of skills. However, limited studies are reported in the literature in regard to school

attitudes. Nevertheless, Biehler (1974) wrote that field theories consider the "attitudinal reactions" of students to be "the most important aspects of learning" (p. 384). Further, the attitudes students hold toward a particular subject or skill are believed by some educators to be "the primary determinant" of how much they will later remember and apply in situations both in and out of school (Biehler, 1974).

Among the responsibilities of middle school counselors is sensitivity to the attitude learning that is going on in the classroom and the planning of experiences that foster the growth of positive attitudes. The dimensions of self-concept, attitudes toward school, and academic achievement are interrelated. Therefore, it is necessary for middle school counselors to better understand the interrelationships among these variables. The problem investigated in this study was whether a structured classroom group guidance activity presented by middle school counselors is an effective intervention on the self-concepts and attitudes toward school of seventh-grade students.

Need for the Study

A person's self-concept is considered to be "the single most important variable in an individual's life" (Keat, 1974, p. 47). Durdin (1982) also stated that by having a positive self-concept, a child can cope more effectively with his or her own problems and behavior and thereby experience a positive effect on achievement. She further stated that how people feel about themselves can have a pervasive effect on their lives. For example, it can influence how

an individual will do academically and socially. Therefore, it is important for middle school counselors to aid students in developing positive self-concepts.

According to O'Connor (1978), the opportunity for every child to develop a healthy self-concept is a major goal for parents and educators alike. She contended that research efforts have increased awareness of the need for children to understand and accept themselves and have demonstrated the value of self-concept theory in making the educational process more meaningful. O'Connor further suggested that if schools are supposed to be helping to socialize young people, then it would appear that more should be done to help teachers, administrators, and school counselors in guiding children through this critical transition period. She stated that unpreparedness for meeting the crises of the middle school experience may be at the root of the pupil "tune-out" that has plagued middle school systems for so long. One of O'Connor's recommendations was that the general emphasis in the schools should be on "accentuating the positive" in order to foster the development of positive self-concepts.

Wirth (1977) stated that the close relationship between self-concept and academic achievement has been well-documented. She also contended that development of a healthy self-concept in students must become a high priority if schools are to help students reach their academic potential. Tunney (1984) similarly contended that it is a well-supported finding that people learn faster, achieve more, and rate their achievement more honestly if they feel good about themselves and if they enjoy the process of learning. Everyone involved in middle school education should help to build students'

self-esteem and to keep it high in order to maximize the time, money, and effort devoted to producing educated youth. He further stated that those who skirt this need by saying that teaching a child self-esteem is too vague to be a proper goal of education are both wrong and missing the point. Self-esteem is teachable in the same way as punctuality, doing homework, and being honest. It develops from working with the whole child toward the ultimate purpose--that young people become self-educating. In keeping with the perspectives of Wirth, Tunney, and others, one of the goals for the Alachua County, Florida, School District Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program is "to assist students in developing positive and realistic self-concepts" (Alachua County School District, 1985, p. 5). Another goal is "to assist students in understanding personal values, attitudes, beliefs, and rights of others (Alachua County School District, 1985, p. 5).

The "Me in Mental Health" unit (Mental Health Association of Minnesota, 1983) has been considered a means of addressing these goals. This classroom group guidance unit was compiled by the Mental Health Association of Minnesota and was designed to enhance the self-concepts of seventh-grade students. The unit was based on the assumption that a healthy self-concept is vital to maintaining good mental health and that there are certain things that can be done to improve and maintain mental health. The purpose of this unit is to help students think about who they are, about who they want to become, and about how to accept the person they are at any given time, and to help them develop a positive self-image that will continue in their

future (Mental Health Association of Minnesota, 1983). This unit was designed to be incorporated into a seventh-grade curriculum; however, there has been no previous study done to determine whether this unit does, in fact, have an effect on the self-concepts and attitudes toward school of seventh-grade students. Thus, the purpose of this study was to determine the effects, if any, of this unit on the self-concepts and attitudes toward school of seventh-grade students. As a result, it was believed this study would provide useful information in determining the effectiveness of the "Me in Mental Health" unit which, in turn, would be helpful in deciding whether the unit should become part of the Alachua County Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program.

According to Soares, Soares, and Pumerantz (1983), the research in professional literature is primarily concerned with the nature of pre-adolescents and not with what happens to them in middle schools. They also indicated that there is a need for information on the views that students have of themselves. It was reported that self-attitudes and self-values of individuals are formulated, molded, changed, and stabilized to a great extent during the middle school years. Because a large part of these years is spent in school, it is reasonable to assume that the school should play a major role in the self-concept development of its students.

Unfortunately, there are few studies in the literature that have measured the self-perceptions of pre-adolescents. Wiles and Thomason (1975) reported that there is little evidence available upon which to evaluate the merits of middle school education. In reviewing a substantial number of studies of middle school research during 1968-1974, they found that two kinds of attitudes had been addressed.

These were attitudes of students toward school and attitudes of parents and teachers toward middle school programs. In studies by Eholich and Murray (1969) and Wood (1973), no significant differences in student attitudes toward school were found. In three other studies (Bryan & Erikson, 1970; Elie, 1970; Schoo, 1970), significant differences in positive attitudes middle school students had toward school were found. Four studies (Case, 1970; Eholich & Murray, 1969; Elie, 1970; Soares, Soares, & Pumerantz, 1973) found middle school students having significantly lowered self-concepts when compared to students in other forms of intermediate education. Wiles and Thomason (1975) indicated that the lack of substantial research at the middle school level can be contributed to poor research procedures, narrow and biased foci, and failure to define clearly subjects of study. Therefore, there is a need for more systematic study of middle school education.

According to a recent study conducted by Connors (1985), which focused on the present state of school guidance and counseling programs, there needs to be more research indicating the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs in schools. She further stated that guidance and counseling programs can become more accountable by proving they have a direct relationship to achievement and an influence on learning.

School counseling roles and functions are changing. Middle school counselors are now involved in a variety of innovative roles and functions which lead to expanded counseling services. Increased service demands bring about closer scrutiny from a variety of sources such as legislative and regulatory bodies, program administrators,

service consumers, and the general public (Krause & Howard, 1976; Moursand, 1973). Each of these groups is demanding substantial accountability. Wheeler and Loesch (1981) also suggested that if school counselors are to serve their consumers and supporters effectively, they must be accountable. Furthermore, with the advent of expanded school counseling services and trends toward increased reliance on external sources of funding, demands for school counselor accountability have increased.

According to Wilson and Rotter (1982), another school counseling trend is the demand for the school counselor's time. Connors (1985) stated that, typically, middle/junior high schools have ratios of 350-500 students to one counselor. Therefore, middle school counselors will find it necessary to search for the most relevant and effective programs. Wilson and Rotter (1982) projected growth in numbers of key school counseling positions and suggested that middle school counselors need to document their efforts. They further recommended that with the increased number of younger children to be served, the middle school counselor will likely find group work the most economic approach.

Empirical research regarding the effect of affective education programs has been scarce. Burnett (1983) indicated that there has been little development, description, or recent research in the area of small group, limited session programs that can be conducted by middle school counselors and that aim at enhancing the self-concepts of children in the regular classroom. Peters and Hansen (1971) also contended that guidance and counseling practices cannot consistently grow in effectiveness unless they are evaluated by school counselors

using a variety of kinds of research. These authors further stated that research is necessary for the continued improvement of the guidance program. Without it, it is difficult to tell whether the guidance program is truly effective, actually meeting the needs of the students, and implementing its unique function in the total school program. They recommended that the contribution of guidance functions to the instructional program, extracurricular activities, and administration needs to be enhanced through research. Professionals concerned about the continuation of guidance services must document information, statistics, or studies that support the contribution of middle school counselors to the total educational process.

Therefore, studies are needed to show that middle school counseling makes a difference. This study addressed the need for additional research on middle school guidance program effectiveness. Furthermore, it fulfilled a need for additional research at the middle/junior high school level.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of the "Me in Mental Health" structured classroom group guidance unit, developed by the Mental Health Association of Minnesota (1983), on the self-concepts and attitudes toward school of seventh-grade students. More specifically, this study determined whether the "Me in Mental Health" unit had an effect on general self-concept, motivation for schooling, academic self-concept (performance-based), academic self-concept (reference-based), sense of control over performance, and instructional mastery of students participating in a structured

classroom group guidance unit. In addition, the potential differential effectiveness of this unit for boys and girls and students of different races was explored.

Rationale for the Study

The pre-adolescent years are probably the most critical to the development of a child's mental health. According to the Mental Health Association of Minnesota (1983), there is a rise in emotional and mental health problems during pre-adolescence. Furthermore, it is during this period that the personality is often assaulted and damaged beyond repair (Bronfenbrenner cited in Mental Health Association of Minnesota, 1983). Ingersoll (1982) wrote, "it may be reasonably argued that the development of a positive self-concept is the most important developmental task of childhood" (p. 110). The search for self begins in childhood; therefore, pre-adolescence is important in the development of an effective self-concept. It is during pre-adolescence that the self-image is being crystallized and, at the same time, being revised (Rogers, 1985). Professional literature indicates that pre-adolescents are frequently referred to as the "often forgotten group" and are overlooked in the literature (Cole, 1986). Dougherty (1986) stated that less is known about pre-adolescents than any other group in the life span. He further reported that at no time in the life span is a person in greater need of guidance. Not only is there a lack of research regarding the pre-adolescent age group, but there is little research support for particular approaches to the education of pre-adolescents. These are several of the reasons why the pre-adolescent age group was selected as the target population for

this study. It was hoped that the results of this study would advance current knowledge and possibly discover new knowledge regarding the pre-adolescent child and an intervention that is effective with this age group. If middle school counselors and other middle school educators have more knowledge about pre-adolescents, they may be better able to help these students.

Self-concept was included in this study as a research variable because previous research in human behavior indicates that students' ability to learn is greatly influenced by the way one feels about oneself (Coopersmith, 1967). For example, Lerner (1985) pointed out that self-esteem is the critical variable for intellectual development and is "the master key for learning" (p. 10). According to this view, pre-adolescents with high self-esteem move ahead academically, easily, and naturally, and pre-adolescents with low self-esteem fall behind. O'Connor (1978) contended that research efforts have increased the awareness of the need for pre-adolescents to understand and accept themselves and have demonstrated the value of self-concept theory in making the educational process more meaningful. Furthermore, Wirth (1977) stated that it has become increasingly apparent that the feelings and self-concepts of pre-adolescents have a direct influence on how well they perform in school.

Although there has been little research on the self-concept and attitudes toward school among pre-adolescents, the available literature indicates that attitudes toward school and toward self have an influence on the pre-adolescent's receptiveness to learning. According to Myrick and Dixon (1985), pre-adolescents with positive school attitudes tend to obtain higher grades. Other authors (e.g., Brodie, 1964; Gable, Roberts, & Owne, 1977; Neale, Gill, & Tismer,

1970; Williams, 1970) stated that attitudes toward school also influence performance on standardized achievement tests. It was further reported that students who had negative attitudes about themselves and school often had problems learning. Thus, the results of this study added to the literature concerning self-concept and attitudes toward school among pre-adolescent children. The data may also provide an impetus for further research in these areas.

The "Me in Mental Health" structured classroom group guidance unit was designed for the purpose of enhancing self-concepts of pre-adolescents (Mental Health Association of Minnesota, 1983). Programs such as this, having little or no research data supporting the effectiveness of the intervention, are often submitted to middle school counselors for inclusion in the middle school guidance curriculum. Therefore, investigation of the effectiveness of the "Me in Mental Health" unit on the self-concepts and attitudes toward school among pre-adolescents is needed in order to better describe, understand, and meet the needs of students in this age group. This study provided meaningful information in regard to the effectiveness of the "Me in Mental Health" unit, which is one type of intervention that middle school counselors might use in working with pre-adolescents.

Middle school counselors are the link between school and outside agencies. Outside agencies often provide helpful information and assistance to middle school counselors and the students with which they work. For this study, the Alachua County, Florida, Mental Health Association; the Mental Health Association of Minnesota; the Alachua County, Florida, School District; the middle schools in Alachua

County, Florida; and the school counselors in these schools worked cooperatively to conduct this research project and to better help meet the needs of seventh-grade students enrolled in these schools.

Therefore, this study might provide a model for other school districts and outside agencies who may want to develop a similar relationship.

Ivey (1976) contended that the middle school counselor who simply "counsels" is on the way out. He suggested that middle school counselors can function as teachers and through this role find new and more significant ways to reach a broader range of students. In line with these statements, Carroll (1973) stated that middle school counselors must change so that the identification of school counselors is with education and the learning process. Lindberg (1977) pointed out that there is a growing amount of literature in the school counseling field to support the need for middle school counselors to become more involved in the classroom. For example, Wrenn (1973) reported that school counselors are going to have to place more emphasis and time on classroom experiences and become more involved in this process. Further, he stressed the need for school counselors to become more intimately involved in the total educational process. Other authors (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1975) contended that middle school counselors should place renewed energies into conducting regularly scheduled classroom guidance units in the area of self-image. Furthermore, Beane (1986) pointed out that middle school counselors must be placed in more central roles in the school program than they have been in the past. Because of their professional training and interest, Beane suggested that this group offers a special expertise in the area of self-concept and self-esteem

enhancement. Thus, the results of this study have implications for practicing middle school counselors as well as those who are still in training. If the structured classroom group guidance intervention is effective, then school counselor training programs should pay more attention to providing future middle school counselors with knowledge, skills, and techniques for conducting classroom group guidance programs. Accordingly, inservice and staff development programs may be needed to help improve and strengthen knowledge and skills in this area among the middle school counselors currently in the field.

Mashih and Kushel (1970) contended that all middle school counselors should be involved in research and that neglect of research has been a glaring shortcoming of the school counseling movement. Furthermore, Cash (1970) stated that only through generation of empirical data will middle school counseling be regarded as a positive force by others. He indicated that such data are necessary to convince those outside the profession of the important contributions school counseling makes to the total educational program.

The outcomes of this study contribute to the literature and stimulate further research in the areas of pre-adolescent children, self-concept, attitudes toward school, structured classroom group guidance programs, middle school counselors, and middle school guidance programs. Furthermore, this study may spark reaction and interest into the research of the effectiveness of the "Me in Mental Health" unit and similar programs, as well as the efficiency of classroom group guidance interventions that can be conducted by middle school counselors.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are used throughout this dissertation:

Academic self-concept (performance-based) is defined as a student's self-confidence in his/her academic abilities and feelings about school performance (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980, p. 8).

Academic self-concept (reference-based) is defined as the way students think other people (teachers, family, friends) feel about the students' school performance and ability to succeed (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980, p. 8).

Attitude is defined as a consistent tendency to react in a particular way, either positively or negatively, to an object or an event (Ruch, 1967, p. 198).

Classroom group guidance is defined as a systematic, sequentially planned humanistic education program that provides an environment for integrating affective and cognitive learning experiences (Gumaer, 1980, p. 91).

Group guidance is defined as a group procedure which focuses on providing information to a group of people at a given time. It is leader-centered and differs from traditional classroom instruction in that the information presented is not subject matter oriented (Duncan, 1980, p. 51).

"Me in Mental Health" unit is defined as a structured classroom group guidance unit designed to enhance the self-concepts of seventh-grade students (Mental Health Association of Minnesota, 1983).

Motivation for schooling is defined as the effect of students' reactions to past school experiences upon their motivation in school.

It is the way students feel about how hard they want to work in school, how highly they value school, and how much they want to pursue further schooling (Scott Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980, p. 8).

Pre-adolescence is defined as students enrolled in the seventh grade (typically, 12 to 14 years of age).

Self-concept is defined as a personality construct based on one's perceptions of oneself which are rooted in past experience and interactions with others. As described by Combs and Snygg (1959), it is that part of the personality which contains the individual's beliefs about his/herself and thus determines his/her behavior. Operationally, self-concept is defined as the score students receive on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale.

Self-evaluation (self-esteem) is defined as the evaluation which an individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to him/herself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which the individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. Self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds for him/herself (Coopersmith, 1967).

Student's instructional mastery is defined as the school skills needed in order to organize school life and to succeed in school (e.g., use of school time effectively and efficiently, persistence in instructional tasks, focus of attention on instructional tasks, seek and use feedback, evaluate own work) (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980, p. 9).

Students sense of control over performance is defined as the way students feel about being able to exercise control over situations that affect them at school and to take responsibility for the outcome of relevant school events (grades, promotions, etc.) (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980, p. 9).

Organization of the Study

Chapter II includes a review of the related literature on (a) pre-adolescents, (b) the role of the middle school counselor, (c) classroom group guidance activities, (d) self-concept, (e) student attitudes toward school, and (f) the "Me in Mental Health" unit. Chapter III describes the methodology used in the study and includes a discussion of the instruments used for assessment purposes. Chapter IV presents the results of the study and Chapter V includes a discussion of the study and its results.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the professional literature related to this study is presented in this chapter. The areas covered include (a) pre-adolescents, (b) the role of the middle school counselor, (c) classroom group guidance activities, (d) self-concept, (e) student attitudes toward school, and (f) the history and development of the "Me in Mental Health" unit.

Pre-Adolescents

Early in this century, authors recognized that the early adolescence period was characterized by unique traits and special needs. For example, Hall (1904) described adolescence as a period of swiftly accelerated growth followed by equally swift deceleration of the growth rate. Hall gathered data which showed that many people suffered considerable anxiety about their growth and about their new organic functions during this period. He claimed that his subjects went through times of emotional turbulence, erratic behavior, and independent assertiveness during this transition period. He further suggested that new developmental tasks and adjustment problems are caused by physiological changes in the functioning of the body, by changes in perceptions of the self that inevitably accompany these

physiological alterations of the body dynamics, by changes in modes of cognitive functioning, and by ways in which home, school, and other social institutions view the individual and deal with these changes. Hall contended that the transitional period of adolescence, usually of a three- to five-year duration, is marked by (a) differences in maturity levels within each sex and between sexes, as well as changes in physiological functioning which are greater than those occurring at any other time during the growth cycle; (b) the gradual emergence of a more adult-like mode of intellectual functioning; and (c) psychological and social reorientation more traumatic than that of any other period of growth.

According to Gesell, Ilg, and Cunes (1956), the pre-adolescent transitional period is marked by the end of one cycle of emotional organization and the beginning of another. The emotional development of the child, if plotted on a line graph, would show many major peaks and valleys. These authors stated that learning to cope with a changing body, a new mode of intellectual operations, and the desire to be one's own person--independent of familial dominance--presents a tremendous problem of adjustment for youngsters. They suggested that during no other period of human growth and development are youngsters required to adjust simultaneously to so many changes. Furthermore, the pre-adolescent period is marked by a tremendous change in the individual's perception of self and consequently, in a quest for a satisfying self-concept. Who am I? What am I able to do? Where do I fit into the social world? Where do I belong? What do I believe? Questions such as these and the exploration of where and to whom to

look for answers are among the requirements of persons in transition from childhood to adolescence.

Tanner (1962) pointed out that during the transitional years the child begins in an apparent state of physical adjustment. The emergence of puberty shatters the stability enjoyed by pre-pubescent children. The body changes occurring during the fifth- to eighth-grade years cause problems of personal adjustment, especially in a society in which physical appearance receives great emphasis.

As a means of defining the pre-adolescent, Eichhorn (1966) suggested the concept of transescence. He identified transescence as "the stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence" (p. 3). Lipsitz (1979) wrote that early adolescence is the period from 12 to 15 years of age and that this period is often portrayed as a bridge linking childhood and adolescence.

Middle childhood developmental tasks were presented by Havighurst (1972). These include (a) learning physical skills necessary for ordinary games; (b) building wholesome attitudes toward oneself as a growing organism; (c) learning to get along with peers; (d) learning appropriate gender roles; (e) developing basic reading, writing, and math skills; (f) developing concepts essential for day to day living; (g) developing a value system; (h) achieving personal independence; and (i) developing attitudes toward school groups and institutions. These characteristics describe a distinct stage of social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development which typifies the pre-adolescent and to which middle school philosophy and concept are pointed.

Bondi (1972) used the term "middlescents" to describe early adolescent students. He suggested that personal development begins to undergo significant, perplexing alterations during the middle school years. He further stated that frequently, pre-adolescents commence a self-searching quest, seeking to locate themselves in a shifting social complex--"a journey some adults never complete satisfactorily" (p. 23).

Lipsitz (1979) discussed the social cost of society's ambivalent attitude toward early adolescence. She asserted that seventh-grade students are most likely to be the victims of violence in school. It was further reported that the incidence of gonorrhea in adolescents ages 10 to 14 increased 10% between 1964 and 1975, nearly twice the increase in reported cases in 15- to 19-year olds. Drug abuse peaks during early adolescence and girls 15 and under are the only age group for whom the birth rate has not shown a decrease. The onset of alcohol abuse occurs around age 12 and the rate of running away has doubled in the past decade, with the average age of runaways now being 14. Fifteen and under also is the only age group experiencing an increase in the rate of first admissions to mental hospitals and juvenile crime seems to "blossom" around age 14. Furthermore, the average age of children in foster care is 12. Lipsitz contended that the early adolescent age group has been seriously overlooked in research. Moreover, she argued that young adolescents have been overlooked in school programs and have not received their fair share of social services. However, Lipsitz did indicate that the beginnings of concern were being observed. Some evidence of this includes growth in membership of the Society for Adolescent Medicine, nationwide

attention being focused on the juvenile justice system, the report of the President's Commission on Mental Health underscoring the need for new research and programs for adolescents, the birth of the Center for Early Adolescence, and other special programs.

The pre-adolescent student received much attention in the professional literature during the middle school movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. More recently, however, there has been little research that has focused on this particular age group. Wiles and Thomason (1975) indicated that there is a lack of substantial research at the middle school level and that there is a need for more systematic study of middle school learners and programs.

Pre-adolescence is a time of rampant social, physical, intellectual, and behavioral changes (Lipsitz, 1984; Strahan, 1982). Eichhorn (1984) indicated that the most evident of the changes which occur during the middle school years are biological. He pointed out that many middle school educators believe that a youngster's physical development has far reaching implications for the educational process. In line with this statement, Strang (1957) indicated that facts about the physical growth preceding and following puberty are important. She contended that bodily changes, especially if they are sudden, change the pre-adolescent's image and self-concept.

Georgiady, Heald, and Romano (1984) reported that during the middle school years, many dramatic and exciting changes can be seen in young people. Physically, their bodies are changing, reflecting the play activities of childhood to the reproductive capabilities of adulthood. Psychologically, they are changing as they begin to deal

with abstract concepts and apply principles of inductive reasoning to complex problems. Emotionally, they are struggling with the frustration of escaping from adult domination and experiencing the anxieties of accepting the responsibilities that go with independence. Pre-adolescents are caught between two worlds, neither child nor adult, somewhere in between, and they fluctuate between the extremes. Social relationships also are changing. The authors defined social development as the ways an individual integrates oneself into society and suggested that some aspects of social development that occur during the pre-adolescent years include (a) identification with appropriate sex roles, (b) clarification of values and attitudes, (c) initiation of responsible social behavior, (d) the attainment of social acceptance, and (e) learning how to achieve success in terms of one's desires and goals. The authors further pointed out that four themes of change emerge as students enter adolescence. These include (a) the theme of self-acceptance, (b) the theme of sex role relationships, (c) the theme of independence, and (d) the theme of broader horizons. It was suggested that by providing activities based on themes of change, schools can help pre-adolescents to engage in social experiences which are appropriate for successful social development in subsequent stages of growth.

Campbell (1965) spoke of the feelings of estrangement many youth experience today and the resultant feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, helplessness, poor self-esteem, and self-deprecation. He further contended that pre-adolescents are particularly at risk due to the plethora of changes within their bodies as well as the social and academic adjustments to be accommodated. In light of the

developmental needs of the pre-adolescent and given the elements common to the peer culture, namely drugs and alcohol, Campbell proclaimed that it is imperative that the school environment be responsive to those special needs. He further contended that programs which build a sense of belonging and increase success experiences are critical for the pre-adolescent.

In 1984, Eichhorn stated that youngsters in the middle school years are considered neither children nor adolescents, but rather young persons in transition. He further contended that they are unique persons in need of unique educational programs.

Role of the Middle School Counselor

According to Beane (1986), the middle school has historically been regarded as a "guidance" school. This author pointed out that this not only means that the school maintains a comprehensive guidance department which includes professionals with specific preparation in personal counseling but it also suggests that the concept of guidance permeates the entire school program. Furthermore, the school provides a supportive environment in which pre-adolescents can develop concepts and skills related to personal and social growth and is one in which these students have the best possible chance to develop an accurate and adequate set of self-perceptions.

A role statement for middle school counselors was developed by the Maine School Administrative District No. 5 in 1976, which stated:

Guidance in the middle school is concerned with meeting the personal, social, emotional, and educational needs of children of varied maturity levels. Its purpose is to help each child make a satisfactory adjustment to life, both in school and out. This service is provided for all children,

not only for those who have behavior problems, learning difficulties, and deep-seated emotional disturbances, normal, well-adjusted children also need to be guided in their thinking, their attitudes, and their personality development. (Maine School Administrative District No. 5, 1976, p. 7)

According to the role statement developed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), "the focus of school counselors serving different school levels is differentiated by the developmental tasks necessary for the different stages of growth the students confront going through school" (ASCA Governing Board, 1981, p. 7). One of the major functions of school counselors presented in this document is

structured developmental guidance experiences presented systematically through groups (including classrooms) to promote growth of psychological aspects of human development (e.g., ego, career, emotional, moral, and social development). Such interventions can logically become an integral part of such curriculum areas as social studies, language arts, health, or home economics. Individual or small group counseling is provided when the needs deserve more attention or privacy. (p. 9)

A specific function which related to school counselors at the middle school level included in the role statement is

concentrate efforts (through group guidance, peer facilitators, and teacher in-service training) to smooth the transition for students from the more confining environment of the lower school to the middle or junior high school where students are expected to assume greater responsibility for their own learning and personal development. (ASCA Governing Board, 1981, pp. 9-10)

Schmidt (1984) reported that one issue related to the counselor's role is whether counselor functions should be more preventive than remedial (Gerler, 1976; Hohensil, 1981). Some authors have recommended increasing preventive/developmental counseling services (Gerler, 1976). Schmidt (1984) mentioned several terms that are used

to identify preventive approaches. These include psychological education, developmental counseling, or classroom guidance. The basic premise of each maintains that school counselors should be involved with all students and should focus on concerns that have long-range significance for young people's development. Schmidt further suggested that it might be appropriate for future counselors to recognize the value of both remedial and preventive services. He also indicated that developmental classroom guidance activities provide important experiences for students and can play a vital role in helping to improve overall classroom and school atmospheres. He concluded that future school counseling programs should maintain a delicate balance between remediation and prevention.

McEwin (1981) maintained that while the teaching of knowledge is an important component of the middle grades program, the pre-adolescent must have a comprehensive instructional program that reflects opportunities for personal development as well. In support of this statement, Shockley, Schumaker, and Smith (1984) contended that the absence of an extended guidance program is of crucial importance because of what middle school educators know about pre-adolescent needs in the area of personal development. The authors suggested that given the tremendous growth, intellectual changes, and the emotional instability of the pre-adolescent, most middle schools recognize the need to assist students in (a) understanding themselves and others, (b) self-concept and respect for others, (c) understanding behavior and values, (d) decision-making, and (e) developing interpersonal skills.

Sprinthall (1980) contended that new education must include the personal and psychological development of each pupil. He maintained

that the psychological domains of self-development, ego maturity, competence and efficacy, moral development, and interpersonal conceptual growth need to be emphasized as the real goals of the educational enterprise. He further stated that preventing mental illness can be most effectively accomplished by promoting psychological growth. It was Sprinthall's contention that guidance has much to offer the needed reform for education. He believed that guidance as a profession can turn from treatment to education and proposed that students in the classroom need an educational process that combines and synthesizes content and process, ideas and feelings, cognition and emotion, and self and interpersonal growth. Sprinthall called this "the experience of significant and comprehensive education" (p. 488). Sprinthall continued by stating that not only does the general curriculum fail to improve the student's "mind," but even worse, it negatively impacts the level of psychological development (e.g., values, attitudes, self-concept). This author further contended that there is a clear and compelling need to put guidance in an educational role from at least two standpoints: (a) to help reset educational goals for schools and (b) to modify instruction and curriculum content (Sprinthall, 1980).

Kohlberg, LaCrosse, and Ricks (1971) examined a series of longitudinal studies and found that estimates of psychological and moral maturity predicted positively to life-skill success, but academic achievement did not. The authors contended that the best predictors of the absence of mental illness are the presence of forms of personal competence and ego maturity during childhood. According to Jersild and Tyler (1941), ratings of psychological maturity were

more predictive of success after school than was grade-point achievement.

In a response to the national reports on reform in schooling, Herr (1984) stated that intellectual effort and educational excellence are affected by student feelings of security and self-esteem that cannot be ignored if children or youth are to develop the competencies to become fully functioning adults and future workers of quality. He further reported that school counselors have become the consciences of educational policy and the facilitators of personal development of human capital. In addition, Herr pointed out that school counselors have achieved a record of successes in helping schools deal with the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to academic achievement, mental health, self-esteem, interpersonal relations, racial integration in education, career planning, decision-making, work adjustment, stress management, and increases in self-esteem.

Beane (1986) contended that the conception of the counselor's role, from the viewpoint of enhancing the self-concept and self-esteem of students, is unsatisfactory because counselors are usually the most highly trained professionals in this area. However, when middle grade students were asked to identify significant others in their decisions concerning self-esteem, they rarely mentioned counselors. The role of counselors in most middle-level schools provides little ongoing contact with larger numbers of students and a secondary role, at least, in curriculum planning (Beane, 1986). Therefore, he contended that counselors ought to play a larger part in a middle level school that stresses the self-enhancement of its students. Furthermore, Beane suggested four major areas of counselor involvement in the

school: (a) counselors should engage in continuous efforts to raise the consciousness of other educators in the area of self-concept and self-esteem, (b) counselors should help teachers develop skills related to enhancing the students' self-concept and self-esteem, (c) counselors should make use of their knowledge and skills in curriculum planning, and (d) counselors should help to develop and coordinate student support networks in the school. Beane further contended that in view of the vulnerability of middle graders' self-concept and self-esteem, in a world of discontinuity and disbelief, educators ought to be convinced of the compelling need for self-concept enhancement. In addition, he stated that the institutional features and curriculum plans of middle grade schools must be carefully analyzed to ensure that they enhance rather than debilitate self-perceptions. Beane contended that counselors must be placed in a much more central role in the school program than they have been in the past. Moreover, he proclaimed that because of their professional training and interest, this group offers a special expertise in the area of self-concept and self-esteem.

Pappas and Miller (1976) reported that interest in the unique role and function of middle school counselors was stimulated with the expansion of middle schools during the 1970s. Questions were raised by a number of counselors, administrators, and counselor educators regarding the status and future direction of middle school guidance programs. These authors pointed out that little is found in the literature that directly focuses on the planning and implementation of the middle school guidance component. Furthermore, there is an absence of descriptive information as to what middle

school counselors are doing, what they are expected to do, and what special competencies should be included in their professional preparation. In response to the identified need for a survey that would adequately describe the status of middle school guidance programs, Pappas and Miller described a state survey that was developed to gather descriptive information from middle school principals and to obtain their perceptions of their counselors. The counselor functions (i.e., competencies) used in the survey instrument were developed by the Counselor Educators of Michigan (Geisler, 1974). From these functions, a listing of 42 specific competencies were compiled and categories were formed indicating whether the competency was a (a) primary counselor function, (b) secondary counselor function, or (c) non-counselor function. The format was developed and selected counselor educators and middle school counselors assisted in the refinement of the competencies. The survey was then distributed to 129 middle schools throughout the state of Michigan. The forms were mailed to the principals of these schools, requesting that they complete demographic information about the guidance programs as well as asking them to rate the specific counselor functions in relation to their existing programs. Complete data were received from 68 schools, and in 56 of these schools principals reported the existence of an organized guidance program. The 10 highest ranking counselor functions, as indicated by principals with organized guidance programs, were presented in the results. The authors concluded that counseling, organizing and administering the program, and working with staff, parents, and the community appeared to be the activities that these principals viewed as important for their middle school

counselors. Furthermore, those schools that had organized programs seem to have had administrators who support these counselor functions. The authors further suggested that the concept of what a good middle school counseling program is needs to be further developed and communicated.

Georgiady, Heald, and Romano (1984) contended that guidance should be viewed as an integral part of the pre-adolescent's total learning experiences. It was pointed out that the middle school counselor plays an important and pivotal role in guidance and that the counselor assists parents in carrying out responsibilities of the home, advises the school's administrator in matters relating to the school's overall affective program, confers with teachers concerning the performance of their guidance efforts, and meets with students to help them with difficulties or needs of a personal nature. Furthermore, the counselor must be able to "wear many hats" and must utilize special skills in applying knowledge and expertise, formulating programs, integrating curriculum, and providing leadership to student development. These authors identified the following areas of responsibility most common to middle school counselors: (a) having the ability to construct an appropriate guidance program, (b) sharing guidance knowledge and expertise with others, (c) being "high visibility" affective leaders, (d) demonstrating professional/affective competency, (e) encouraging continuous training and retraining of school personnel to meet the needs of the adolescent, (f) participating in a multitude of student-related conferences, and (g) engaging in individual and/or group "developmental" strategies in which the student is given assistance in

solving problems and/or fulfilling needs. In addition, it was proposed that the middle school counselor role places more emphasis upon the counselor as a positive affective force, mainly functioning to modify student behavior through any means found to be effective.

Bohlinger (1976) contended that "the challenge facing middle schools today is to institute educational programs which will enable the transescent to encounter successfully the developmental and learning tasks faced during the transitional period between childhood and adolescence" (p. 7). This author further proclaimed that the need to assist transescents in accomplishing these tasks calls for guidance and counseling services. Following a review of the professional literature, Bohlinger declared that there was a need for a comprehensive guidance model but that such a model for use in the middle school had not yet been assembled. A study designed to investigate middle school guidance practices was described by the author. In this study, a survey was sent to 162 middle schools in Ohio. Each school was asked to indicate how may counselors were assigned to the school and to indicate which services counselors performed. Responses were received from 106 schools. The results indicated that 91% of the middle schools had counselors, but no school reported having all of the identified guidance and counseling program components. Bohlinger pointed out that the components necessary to build a comprehensive guidance model designed to help transescents achieve their developmental and learning tasks are present in both the literature and practice. These components include the counselor component, the advisor component, the peer counseling component, and the exploratory component. Bohlinger also provided a step-by-step

plan for the implementation of a comprehensive guidance model in the middle school.

Tindall (1976) reported that the traditional role of the middle school counselor was changing and new functions were emerging. She also indicated several areas of concern to middle school counselors which included feelings of discouragement regarding administrative support for developing strong guidance programs, a lack of role identity, and a need to engage in counseling activities beyond individual and small group sessions.

In response to the identified need for obtaining more precise clarification of the middle school counselor's role and function, Miller and Pappas (1978) conducted a study among the counselors in Michigan and South Carolina. The purpose of the study was to determine the priorities middle school counselors viewed as important in their roles. Surveys were mailed to 80 Michigan and 70 South Carolina middle school counselors. The survey requested that the counselors rate 42 counselor functions as either primary, secondary, or non-counselor functions. Of the total group of 150 surveys mailed, the combined results of the 110 (73%) completed forms provided the data. The results indicated that middle school counselors were able to identify and rank priorities, but the actual implementation of the activities within their schools needed to gain further exposure and be shared through professional journals and at professional conferences. Miller and Pappas pointed out that one implication of this study is that the identified functions provided some guidelines that might aid middle school counselors in promoting (their own) accountability and clarifying role definition. Another implication suggested by the

authors was that middle school counselors, certification personnel, and counselor educators in various states needed to address the issue of certification of middle school counselors. Moreover, there needed to be a clear definition of who the middle school counselor is and what expectations the public has of the counselor. Furthermore, counselor education programs can utilize the information gleaned from the study to appraise the emphasis being placed on the preparation of middle school counselors.

Lindberg (1977) reported a growing amount of literature in the counseling field to support the need for school counselors to become more involved in the classroom. He further stated that there is a clear trend toward school counselors becoming more involved in the classroom. Wrenn (1973) stressed the need for school counselors to become more intimately involved in the total educational process. At a national meeting of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (now the American Association for Counseling and Development), Wrenn (1973) stated that school counselors must reexamine their role if they are going to survive as a profession. Furthermore, he pointed out that they are going to have to place more emphasis and time on classroom experiences, become more involved with the process, and spend less time engaged in one-to-one counseling. His reasons were based on the current needs in the classroom and counselor-student staffing ratios. On the other hand, Altmann and Conklin (1983) cautioned school counselors about maintaining a highly visible profile and for attempting to convince teaching staffs that they have skills to impart. These authors further suggested that, in their attempt to gain visibility and to become part of the teaching team, school

counselors may forget that their primary purpose is helping students. It was these authors' contention that school counselors must re-establish themselves as experts of educational and vocational guidance and that a more comprehensive, effective system should be available for students to plan their educational and/or occupational futures. Altmann and Conklin further declared that school counselors must weigh the advantages and disadvantages of various systems before implementing one in their schools and that school counselors should try to accomplish this by clearly stating their roles.

Cole (1979) stated that the middle school has emerged as a school focused on facilitating the development of the pre- and early-adolescence. She pointed out that there has been little description of the counselor's roles or the components of guidance programs in the middle school. Moreover, research, guidelines, or direction for the counselor in the middle school is scant, although virtually every description of the middle school concept and rationale includes an emphasis on guidance as an integral part of the school. Cole proposed a guidance model that emphasizes preventive and developmental aspects of the guidance program and stresses group work. It was organized around four roles for the guidance counselor--counselor, consultant, coordinator, and curriculum specialist. Cole further pointed out that in addition to possessing the traditional counseling skills, middle school counselors must be (a) knowledgeable about growth and development of the emerging adolescent; (b) skilled in working with groups; (c) trained as a consultant and comfortable working with parents, teachers, and other adults, as well as students; (d) adaptable enough to fit into the flexible middle school structure;

and (e) committed to the need for preventive and developmental, in addition to remedial, guidance and counseling.

After a review of the current criticisms of education, George (1986) pointed out that educators have made incredible efforts to improve the schools or to demonstrate that public schools are better than what the public has been led to believe. He also stated that the school effectiveness movement has tremendous implications for the work of school counselors at all levels and especially those in middle schools and junior high schools. It was further suggested that school counselors must assume a new set of school-wide roles and that these roles should fit the needs for what might be called an "educational ombudsman." This role was defined as "one person in the school who assumes the responsibility for ensuring that fundamental program components are implemented successfully" (p. 183). Moreover, the school counselor in today's successful middle schools must participate more vigorously in forming a new vision of what school can and should accomplish. It was pointed out that no one else in the school is more attuned to the needs of middle school students, more child-centered, or is better able to point out that these students are much more than cognitive beings and that there is no conflict between the need to raise test scores and the need to attend to the affective side of students' lives. Furthermore, according to George, no one else is likely to have the group facilitation and organizational development skills that will enable the school staff to move together to a new sense of mission. The school counselor may also be uniquely able to fulfill a role in curriculum coordination. Furthermore, the teaching

staff needs to be encouraged to identify and build on their own strengths.

School counselors are trained to observe human behavior and provide feedback so that such information can become growth producing. In addition, the school counselor understands the human need to be an important part of an important group. Therefore, school counselors should take an active role in training teachers in planning skills and in helping them to realize what they can do together. Teachers and administrators usually need help in learning how to participate in collaborative decision-making. Therefore, a consulting counselor, trained in the skills of group management, can contribute to the democratically oriented management processes. In conclusion, George (1986) stated that school counselors must consider these new roles; otherwise, the national obsession with testing, credit accumulation, tracking, and negative thinking as a way of life will move the schools closer to institutions in which students are perceived as nothing more than products and in which all of the goals school counselors espouse will be imperiled.

Classroom Group Guidance Activities

Shertzer and Stone (1981) defined group guidance as "any part of a guidance program that is conducted with groups of students rather than with an individual pupil" (p. 200). These authors suggested that the main purpose of group guidance is to provide information and data to facilitate decision making and behavior. They further indicated

that the approach of group guidance is primarily preventive in nature. Gazda (1978) stated that group guidance is "organized to prevent the development of problems, that its content includes primarily educational-vocational-personal information, that its typical setting is a classroom, and that its members number approximately twenty to thirty-five" (p. 2). According to Shertzer and Stone, the group leader has the major responsibility for management, direction, activity, and structure of the guidance groups. Several advantages of group guidance have been outlined by Shertzer and Stone, including (a) enabling school counselors to have contact with more students, (b) accepting by students because they do not view themselves as different, (c) developing students' capacities for mutual interaction, (d) efficiently using time and money, (e) providing realistic and lifelike situations, (f) accepting ideas and suggestions provided by other students, (g) providing situations for more adequate problem-solving activities, and (h) involving students in social interaction and less expectant of advice or direction from the school counselor.

According to Gazda (1971), the goal of group guidance is to provide students with prevention-oriented, accurate information which will help them make more appropriate plans and life decisions. The content includes educational, vocational, personal, and social information which is not otherwise systematically taught in academic courses. Furthermore, providing accurate information for use in improved understanding of self and others is the direct emphasis in group guidance, whereas attitude change frequently is an indirect outcome or goal. Gazda further stated that group guidance is recommended for all students on a regularly scheduled basis. In addition, group guidance makes an indirect attempt to change attitudes

and behaviors through provision of accurate information or an emphasis on cognitive or intellectual functioning. Gazda contended that the helping professional shall never be able to "patch up" all the individuals who are suffering from experiences of failure which lead them to delinquency, mental illness, or both. Thus, he argued that educational programs must become increasingly oriented toward prevention of personal-emotional problems rather than remediation. Therefore, he called for a rebirth of group guidance or a substitute group movement such as "human relations" classes in the junior and senior high schools. He further proclaimed that school counselors must take the lead to find a place in the curriculum for group guidance or human relations training and/or courses of study. Gazda pointed out that there are typically three different means employed for providing group guidance in the secondary school: (a) group guidance classes (which are usually organized through the homeroom or advisee group, (b) units within academic courses (usually in the social studies core and the language arts core), and (c) credit courses (such as psychology, occupations, and "problems"). He suggested that to insure that some systematic and organized group guidance program is available to all students, the group guidance class which meets once a week or every other week is recommended as the primary group guidance procedure. It was further pointed out that the student is more receptive to learning if the information being dispensed is relevant and timely; therefore, the group guidance classes must be geared to students' interests and needs.

Structure is "the degree of form or order found in the therapeutic field" (Leland & Smith, 1965, p. 66). Kaczkowski (1979)

described a structured group as one that has highly specific goals, each member's role in the group is defined, prescribed exercises or experiences are used, and an agenda for the life of the group. Furthermore, materials are "structured" if they have a specific shape, form, or content and are used for specific purposes (Leland & Smith, 1965).

Duncan (1980) defined group guidance as "a group procedure which focuses on providing information to a group of people at a given time. It is leader-centered and differs from traditional classroom instruction in that the information presented is not subject matter oriented" (p. 51). Gumaer (1986) stated that school counselors are in a unique position of being able to maximize pre-adolescents' learning through structured group experiences. He described four group procedures that middle school counselors might use in working with their students. These procedures include (a) classroom group guidance, (b) discussion groups, (c) growth-centered group counseling, and (d) problem-centered group counseling.

Gumaer defined developmental classroom guidance as a "systematic, sequentially planned humanistic education program that provides an environment for integrating affective and cognitive learning experiences" (p. 91). He further suggested that the overall goal for classroom group guidance is to provide information that will help prevent developmental concerns from becoming individual problems. Stimulating group interaction related to the information presented was stated as a second goal. In addition, Gumaer pointed out that the developmental needs of a particular age group or class are usually the basis for selecting topics to be presented during group guidance

sessions. He further indicated that, typically, the number of students in classroom group guidance is reflected by the total number of students in a classroom and the sessions are usually presented during a class period of about 50 minutes. Furthermore, the number of sessions depends mostly on the amount of information to be presented. In describing the four group procedures, Gumaer delineated the goals and objectives for each approach. He concluded his report with a list of recommendations for ways in which school counselors can become more involved with group work.

Interest has been shown in the role of the school counselor as it relates to psychological education in the public schools. For example, Wrenn (1973) expressed concern for the changing role of the school counselor and stressed the need for counselors to commit themselves more completely to their schools' total educational program. In addition, Ivey and Weinstein (1970) proposed that counselors should serve as "human development specialists" by working with teachers to promote emotional and social development in the classroom. Mahler (1969) suggested that school systems must become alert to student needs for attaining sense of self-worth and must develop adequate programs to enable young people to increase their self-understanding and abilities to get along in the world.

According to Medis and Wilson (1985), the need to promote the affective growth as well as academic growth of students is inherent in the middle school concept. These authors contended that public and professional groups are asking for measurable outcomes in guidance programs and challenging school counselors to prove their positive impact on the students they serve. It was also pointed out

that school counselors sometimes find it difficult to provide the multiplicity of services now associated with guidance programs and simultaneously establish and maintain the desired personal relationship with several hundred students.

How can school counselors reach more students more effectively? Mahler and Thompson (1980) responded to this question by pointing out that various authorities in the literature advocate for school counselors to take an active role in the classroom. Moreover, group guidance that focuses on prevention of problems instead of remediation of existing ones is being advocated. Group guidance emphasizes developmental needs and is a process that helps students live effectively in the present by giving them new information, orienting them to ways of dealing with new problems, and assisting them in planning and putting new activities into practice (Glanz & Hays, 1968; Parks, 1973; Shertzer & Stone, 1981; Wrenn, 1962).

Gumaer (1986) contended that school counselors are increasingly being required to provide more direct services to students. He suggested that of all the services, group work provides school counselors with the greatest possible direct contact per student and is the most cost efficient form of direct counselor intervention available.

Mahler and Thompson (1980) suggested that the classroom is a well-suited work area and a developmental group guidance experience is an ideal way for school counselors to integrate the positive aspects of group guidance and the process of human development. These authors described an outreach-oriented, developmental-based guidance workshop which was presented as an effective way to initiate guidance activity

in the classroom. The Understanding Study Skills Workshop, outlined by the authors, was constructed for presentation in ninth- and tenth-grade classes and is one example of how a developmental task may be converted into a useful package of information for students.

Gerler (1976) pointed out that during the early 1970s, school counselors and counselor educators indicated that school counselors need to reduce or eliminate certain non-productive functions and replace them with functions that better demonstrate the value of school counselors to the school program. The author described a study which attempted to identify patterns for school counselor functioning that appeared in the school counseling literature from 1970 through 1974. The investigation consisted of reviewing four counseling journals to locate articles and editorials containing statements about school counselor accountability and cutbacks. The second phase of the study involved examining the articles and editorials to identify what school counselor functions were recommended for helping school counselors deal with accountability and cutbacks in services. The third phase of the investigation consisted of classifying the articles and editorials according to their recommendations for school counselor functioning. A total of 206 articles and editorials mentioning school counselor accountability and school counselor cutbacks were reviewed. The author concluded that much of the counseling literature in the 1970s encouraged school counselors to deal with accountability and cutbacks by broadening their services. Counselors were told to work primarily with associational groups, institutions, and communities rather than primarily with individuals and small groups. Seventy-three articles recommended an increase in preventive/developmental

services and many articles suggested that school counselors help to remedy problems in curriculum areas and in classroom interpersonal relations. Overall, the counseling literature encouraged school counselors to deal with accountability and cutbacks by developing new forms of remedial services and by conducting preventive/developmental programs.

After a review of the literature, Lindberg, Bartell, and Estes (1977) concluded that a significant area not covered was research showing that techniques used in psychological education have a measurable impact on students' attitudes toward school and life. In response to this need, the authors described an ESEA Title III project that was designed to develop a series of interaction experiences directed toward improving psychological education in the classroom and to conduct a research study to evaluate the effectiveness of these interaction experiences. Three high schools in Phoenix were selected to participate in the study. The schools included one lower-, one middle-, and one upper-level class. Four teachers from each school were randomly selected from a list of teachers who had indicated a willingness to participate in the study. One of each teacher's classes was assigned to a control group and another to a treatment group. The population was comprised of 12 teachers and 720 students in three schools. However, because of the large sample and amount of data collected, a random sample of eight students from each treatment and control group was selected for data analysis. Semantic differential scales were used to measure students' attitudes. Five sociometric questionnaires were used to assess student-student and teacher-student interactions. The instruments were administered the

day after the experimental group ended and again eight weeks later. The research design used was the nonrandomized control group pretest/posttest design. The results of the study provided evidence that the classroom interaction experiences were effective in improving students' attitudes and social relationships among students.

Burnett (1983) reviewed the literature in 1983 and reported that there is little research in the area of small group, limited session programs, conducted by school counselors, aimed at enhancing self-concepts in children in the regular classroom. He described a program that attempted to do this. In his study, a class of 28 seventh-grade children were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (P-HSCS) (Piers & Harris, 1969) and out of this group 10 pairs were matched on the basis of their ranks on the P-HSCS. One member of each pair was randomly assigned to the treatment group, the other to the control group. The school counselor conducted a program which consisted of eight weekly sessions, each lasting approximately one hour. The objectives of the program were increased awareness by the children of (a) their characteristics, (b) their feelings and how to deal with them, (c) themselves as individuals responsible for their consequences of that behavior, and (d) other people's feelings. The P-HSCS was administered again to the whole group one week after completion of the treatment program. The results of the study indicated that the measured gain in self-concept was significantly greater for the treatment group than for the control group. Burnett concluded that this indicated that the self-concepts of children in the regular classroom were enhanced as a result of participating in a self-enhancement program and that this type of program would be

beneficial for all children. However, he also suggested that further research and investigation are necessary to ascertain more fully the effects of such programs.

Gerler (1986) discussed a program called Skills for Adolescence which was developed by the Quest National Center in Columbus, Ohio. This program was designed for early adolescents (specifically grades 6 through 8) and deals with a wide range of factors associated with youthful alienation and its prevention. Quest developed the program in cooperation with Lions Clubs International and a team of 57 noted scholars and experts on youth. This program has been adopted by more than 500 school districts throughout North America. Skills for Adolescence is a semester long program offering detailed lesson plans and a full complement of curricular materials, including a textbook for students, a guide for parents, and a series of parent seminars. One of the major goals of the program is for students to discuss aspects of early adolescence in order to gain a greater understanding of the changes they are beginning to experience. Each of the eight units contains 10 fully detailed lessons, selected readings in the student text, homework assignments, writing assignments, and time for a project designed to involve the students in some type of service activity in or out of school. The first major evaluation of the impact of Skills for Adolescence was completed in 1985 (Jurs cited in Gerler, 1986). The study was conducted with 300 students in grades 7 and 8 and involved seven schools randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The results of the study indicated that students who participated in the Skills for Adolescence program made significant gains in comparison with those in the control

group on two important measures: (a) attitudes toward school and teachers, and (b) comfort accepting responsibilities and ability to say no to peer pressure.

Self-Concept

According to Maslow (1954), all people in our society have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, usually high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others. He stated that there are needs for the desire for strength, confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom. Furthermore, there is a desire for reputation, prestige, status, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, or appreciation. Maslow further stated that satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability, and adequacy, of being useful and necessary in the world. Maslow contended that the assumption basic to understanding human behavior is that every significant act is done to satisfy some need. He described the following lower- to higher-order needs: physiological needs (for satisfaction of hunger, thirst), safety needs (for security, order, stability), belongingness and love needs (for affection, identification), esteem needs (for prestige, success, self-respect), and self-actualization needs. Maslow further delineated three major factors that influence self-esteem. These include (a) respect and approval from other people; (b) actual capacity, achievement, and success; and (c) acceptance of and acting upon one's own inner nature. He also contended that learning to accept oneself is the most important of the three.

Self-concept is a term denoting the set of unique cognitions one holds toward the self which are based on past experiences and interactions with people. Bardwick (1971) described the self as "a point of stability, a frame of reference, the main organizing principle available in dealings with the social and physical worlds" (p. 154). She contended that how one perceives the value of self determines the level of self-esteem which is the self-evaluation function of how well one performs in each of one's life roles.

Hamachek (1985) reported that the self-concept frame of reference is a theoretical view that begins with the idea that each person has (a) a self (i.e., a sense of personal existence), (b) a self-concept (i.e., an idea of personal identity), (c) a certain level of self-esteem (i.e., feelings of personal worth), (d) an ego (i.e., a barometer of psychological and emotional strength), and (e) ego boundaries (i.e., gauges of psychological and emotional resiliency). He further stated that the capacity for self-consciousness, or the ability to look at the self from the outside as an object, enables a person to develop the particular cluster of ideas and attitudes that constitute that aspect of personality known as self-concept. Hamachek's definition of self-concept is that aspect of the self that organizes and assimilates one's perceptions and experiences in a coherent self-picture with which one then strives to be consistent. From his point of view, a person's behavior can be understood as an effort to be consistent with his or her self-concept.

Research indicates that how well a person perceives oneself is formed early in life and will determine life expectations and behaviors (Combs & Snygg, 1959; Fitts, 1972b). Furthermore, it is

generally believed that self-concept attitudes form during childhood and become relatively stable over time (Combs & Snygg, 1959; Fitts, 1972a; Yawkey, 1980). However, it also has been strongly suggested that these perceptions can continue to be modified by subsequent experiences, significant others, or traumatic events (Symonds, 1975). Research supports the idea that the sense of self does change over the years; for example, in a study of students in grades 4 through 8, the sixth-grade students expressed the poorest self-attitudes. The eighth graders were the least rejecting of themselves (Kokenes, 1974).

The self-concept seems to play a major role in maintaining an inner consistency and in providing a set of expectancy patterns which may determine how experiences are interpreted by the individual (Combs & Snygg, 1959; Felker, 1974). This process in turn influences new behaviors and events.

According to Rogers (1985), an adequate self-concept is vital to one's well-being. She stated that the search for self begins in childhood. However, Rogers indicated that the intellectual and emotional awareness of self, which emerges from interactions with others, is especially characteristic of adolescents. She further contended that for many reasons, self-perception has an important influence on an individual's behavior. Furthermore, perception of self tends to determine what people experience and how they experience it. Rogers believed that self-concept is especially important during adolescence. She contended that because of their growing autonomy and physical strength, adolescents have a degree of freedom which might make a distorted self-concept dangerous. Moreover, she indicated that

adolescents' self-concepts, built upon their limited childhood experiences, hinder them in relating to new and varied situations. It was Rogers' belief that during adolescence, self-image is being crystallized at the same time it is being revised. She further suggested that the self-concept is maintained and enhanced through a number of processes. These processes are (a) self-actualization, which suggests a progression through sequential and increasingly higher levels of motivation and achievement; (b) achieving a sense of identity which involves attaining a feeling of distinctiveness from others; and (c) mastery or the achievement of important goals--all of which serve to enhance the self-concept.

In recent years there have been numerous reported attempts at enhancing self-esteem in adolescents. The variety of attempts have met with mixed success. King (1974) developed an experiential workshop specifically designed to enhance the self-concept of black adolescents in which a significant increase in self-concept was demonstrated. Schulman, Ford, and Busk (1973) used filmclips, class discussion, and specific assignments and found a significant increase in the participants' self-concepts. Payne, Drummond, and Lunghi (1970) found significant increases in self-concepts among a group of students who left school to participate in an Arctic expedition. Cordelle (1974) used structured group counseling with high school students and demonstrated significant increases in self-concept. Rudman (1971) demonstrated positive change in the self-concepts of college students as a result of participation in encounter groups or encounter tape groups. Roche (1970) used junior high school students

as co-counselors in an elementary school and found no improvement in self-concept as a result of the experience.

Luftig (1983) reported that self-concept has been correlated with a variety of educational and psychological variables. For example, self-concept has been shown to be positively related to school achievement in elementary school children (Purkey, 1970; Wattenberg & Clifford, 1984) and in school achievement with intermediate and secondary school pupils (Shaw & Alves, 1963; Williams & Cole, 1968). Academic success and positive self-concept have also been shown to be positively correlated in black and Hispanic children (Borovetz, 1975; Caplin, 1969; Gorlow, Butler, & Guthrie, 1963; Vasquez, 1974) and in the mentally retarded (Meyers, 1976; Tolor, Tolor, & Blumin, 1974). According to Rogers (1985) and Williams and Cole (1968), the robustness of the relationship of self-concept and school performance has led educators to become cognizant not only of the effects of schooling on cognitive functioning but also on affective development.

In a review of 19 studies, Wylie (1979) reported that the results of those studies gave little support to the widely accepted lore that there is a psychologically important relationship between achievement and overall self-regard. However, she indicated that "there are enough significant positive trends to encourage further explorations which incorporate needed methodological improvements" (p. 393). Wylie contended that continuing the empirical study of self-referent constructs could lead to significant increments in the scientific knowledge of personality provided there is a much more widespread and serious commitment to the conceptual and methodological rigors involved in scientific work.

Lerner (1985) stated that the role of self-esteem in learning has a special status. She believed that teachers generally seem to accept the modern dogma that self-esteem is the critical variable for intellectual development—that is, "the master key to learning" (p. 10). According to this view, children with high self-esteem forge ahead, academically, easily and naturally, and children with low self-esteem fall behind.

In numerous studies, a persistent relationship has been demonstrated between self-concept and self-esteem and several school related variables (Beane & Lipka, 1983). For example, learners with clear self-concepts and positive self-esteem tend to participate more, have higher school completion rates, exhibit more prosocial behavior, and demonstrate greater academic achievement than do peers with unclear or negative self-perceptions. These authors further pointed out that learners who believe they can succeed in school actually do succeed, continued success leads to greater stability in school self-confidence, and conversely, those who fail experience a loss of self-esteem in school which, in turn, contributes to continuing lack of success.

Self-concept also relates to sex-role orientation. In a study of high school students, in grades 10 to 12, masculinity in females was consistently predictive of self-esteem, thus disproving the traditional assumption that a positive adjustment for female adolescents depends upon adopting a feminine sex-role orientation (Lamke, 1982). Among males, both masculinity and femininity appeared important for high self-esteem.

Schulman, Ford, and Busk (1973) reported that a self-concept unit presented to 502 children in 33 classrooms produced significant changes in the students' self-concepts as measured by instruments devised by the authors. The results of studies done by Fournier (1977), Green (1978), Gumaer and Voorneveld (1975), and McGurdy, Ciucevich, and Walker (1977) also indicated that children have more positive attitudes and feelings about themselves after being exposed to a self-enhancement program.

Considering the results of many studies on self-concept, there seem to be major differences between a person who has a high or positive self-concept and one who has a low or negative self-concept. Fitts (1972a) discussed the importance of self-concept in several aspects of human behavior--learning, emotion, motivation, perception, intelligence, self-actualization, and level of assertion.

Clemer and Bean (1981) stated that children with high self-esteem are proud of their accomplishments, act positively on their own behalf, assume responsibility for doing "their share," tolerate frustration if things do not turn out as they would like, approach new challenges with eagerness and enthusiasm, feel able to influence their environment, and display a wide range of feelings. In contrast, children with low self-esteem avoid difficult situations, "put down" others, do not feel valued by others, are easily led, are defensive and easily frustrated, do not know how they feel, and blame others for their own feelings.

Wirth (1977) pointed out that it has become increasingly apparent that children's feelings and self-concepts have a direct influence on

how well they perform in school. Furthermore, students who exhibit high levels of performance tend to view themselves as adequate, capable persons; conversely, students who experience difficulty in achieving academically often see themselves as inadequate, incapable of achievement. Wirth contended that each extreme is reinforcing and that the student is perpetuating his or her self-concept. Moreover, when children see themselves as inadequate, they lose their sense of "canness" and what they can do diminishes (Combs, 1962). Wirth concluded that if children with low self-esteem are to achieve, they must regain their sense of "I can do it" and begin to view themselves as achievers.

A person's self-concept is considered by many to be "the single most important variable in an individual's life" (Keat, 1974, p. 47). According to Durdin (1982), by having a positive self-concept, a child can deal more effectively with his/her own problems and behavior and thereby experience a more positive effect on achievement. He further stated that how people feel about themselves can have a pervasive effect on their lives. It can influence how an individual will do academically and socially. Durdin contended that for these reasons, it is important to aid students in developing positive self-concepts.

Hamachek (1985) suggested that school counselors may be able to enhance and hasten therapeutic insights by conceptually visualizing where their clients' self-development and ego boundary growth are strongest and weakest. Some students are aware of themselves and are sensitive to the way they function behaviorally but are less aware of

themselves as having certain physical, social, emotional, or intellectual attributes. Hamachek indicated that counselors may be most helpful by encouraging clients to be more introspective and sensitive to the ways that they project their physical, social, emotional, or intellectual selves to others. He further stated that a group experience is helpful for this kind of therapy.

Beane (1986) contended that there is a need to enhance the self-perception of students in the middle grades. Given the physical, social, and intellectual changes that occur at this stage, Beane pointed out that students face what could be considered a reconstruction of their self-concepts. Furthermore, with the emergence of the peer group as a reference point for behavior, beliefs, and attitudes, this results in an expanded social arena and potential conflict with the values advocated by adult significant others during the child's earlier years. According to Beane, the rethinking of the self that is related to these changes is a critical need for middle school age students. Moreover, they need the help and guidance of adults in this process if their self-perceptions are to be accurate, realistic, and positive. In addition, Beane stated that educators cannot ignore their responsibility to help these young people develop healthy perceptions of themselves. He further contended that educators should work cooperatively with the family and other agencies to improve self-perceptions, but they must recognize that the educational system is the main constituency for pre-adolescents.

Protinsky and Farrier (1980) pointed out that most research done on adolescents has dealt with college student samples and has been

clinical in nature, while empirical research on early adolescents has been limited. These authors contended that there is a need to study the question of self-image disturbance in the early and middle years of adolescence. In response to this need, the authors conducted a research study to ascertain the answers to these questions: (a) does the self-image of the early and middle adolescent differ from that of the pre-adolescent; (b) if there is an adolescent disturbance, when does it begin; (c) if there is a self-image disturbance, what is its course; and (d) are there differences in self-image due to the variables of sex and class? Stability of the self-image, degree of self-consciousness, global self-esteem, and the depressive affect were the dimensions of self-esteem selected for the study. The sample included 210 Caucasian students, 106 males and 104 females, drawn from three public schools in rural southwest Virginia. The subjects were divided into four groups: (a) pre-adolescents (ages 9-11), early adolescents (ages 12-14), middle adolescents (ages 15-16), and late adolescents (17-18). The Nam Powers (1968) Instrument of Socioeconomic Status determined that 97 subjects were classified as being in the middle and upper status ranges. The instruments used were developed by Simmons, Rosenberg, and Rosenberg (1973). The data were collected over a two-day period. The authors concluded that the self-image does undergo change from the pre-adolescent years through the adolescent years. Furthermore, the pre-adolescents experience the most instability while the early, middle, and late adolescents become relatively more stable with age. Other results indicated that the middle adolescents experience the highest degree of self-consciousness

while the pre-adolescents and early adolescents exhibited less. This study found no firm evidence to substantiate the crisis model of adolescence.

Soares, Soares, and Pumerantz (1973) were concerned that there was little evidence of the effectiveness of the middle school as compared with the traditional middle grade organizations. These authors pointed out that the research in the professional literature deals with the nature of middle grade students and not with what happens to them in middle schools. It was further indicated that there is a need for research on self-perceptions of students in the middle schools and that it is generally believed that a poor self-concept is associated with poor adjustment. Furthermore, a poor self-concept suggests a lack of confidence in facing and mastering the environment, and therefore might accompany deficiency in school performance and anxiety in facing new situations. The authors stated that since a large part of a child's years are spent in school, it seems reasonable to assume that the school plays a major role in the self-concept development of students. Realizing that no major study in the literature has measured the self-perceptions of middle school students, the authors designed a study to discover how the middle school influences the way students in grades 6, 7, and 8 look at themselves and to compare their self-perceptions with those of students in the same grades and comparable environments of traditional schools. This study involved 232 students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Schools that had been set up administratively as middle schools (with grades 6-8) for at least two years were used in the study. Only

students who had been in their present school for two years were included. There were 631 students from five middle schools who participated in the study and a random sample of traditional schools served as control groups. Urban and suburban schools as well as all levels of the socioeconomic spectrum were represented. The instrument used to measure self-perception was a variant of an instrument developed by Soares and Soares (1965, 1966, 1969) for previous research. The results of the study indicated that students in middle schools consistently indicated significantly lower self-perceptions than students in traditional settings. Also, students in traditional schools set higher ideals, and their self-concepts were closer to their ideal concepts than were the self-concepts of students in middle schools. There were few significant differences between boys and girls; however, the girls in traditional schools indicated the highest self-perceptions in almost all instances. The girls in the middle schools showed the lowest self-perceptions with results for the traditional and middle school boys falling in between. The authors observed that self-perceptions tend to lower as students go from grade 6 to grade 8. They suggested that this may be because as students get closer to high school, they become more insecure as they approach decisions involving the choice of a curriculum and vocational goal. In conclusion, the authors stated that the middle school may have to consider its impact on the ways that students in middle schools look at themselves. Furthermore, if the middle school offers advantages that the traditional school does not, those advantages should have an impact on the students' attitudes toward themselves.

Branch, Purkey, and Damico (1976) pointed out that one variable which might be related to student disruption and that may have implications for prescriptive teaching is student self-concept as learner. The authors related that many studies have indicated a clear relationship between academic self-concept and school behavior. Moreover, related research in the area of juvenile delinquency has indicated a relationship between negative self-concept and delinquency. Discovering that almost no data are available which permit an analysis of the relationship between student self-concept as learner and school disruption, the authors designed a study to determine whether middle school students identified as disruptive differed significantly from nondisruptive students on measures of inferred and professed self-concept as learner. The sample for the study was drawn from a population of 3,254 students in grades 5 through 8 at four middle schools in a district school system in North Florida. The four schools, two rural and two urban, represented a diverse population of students. Two hundred eight students identified from school records as disruptive had been removed (i.e., "sent to the office") from the learning environment two or more times during the first six months of the school year. A comparison group of 208 nondisruptive students was randomly selected. The Florida Key and the school academic subscore of the Self-Esteem Inventory were the instruments used to obtain the self-concept as learner data for the study. The results of the study revealed significant differences between the scores of disruptive and nondisruptive students on the Florida Key (Purkey, Gage, & Graves, 1973), with disruptive students scoring significantly lower. However, there were no significant

differences found between or among race, sex, or school. Furthermore, the school-academic subscale of the SEI revealed a significant difference between disruptive and nondisruptive students, with the scores of disruptive students being significantly lower. The authors concluded that students identified by school records as disruptive have significantly lower academic self-concepts than do a comparison group of students identified as nondisruptive. However, while the evidence of the study indicated that there is a persistent relationship between self-concept as learner and student disruption, the authors cautioned that conclusions to cause and effect must remain unformed.

Calsyn, Quicke, and Harris (1980) pointed out that although examples of socialization curricula based on self-enhancement and relationship enhancement principles are fairly prevalent, research on the effectiveness of this type of curriculum is scarce. These authors conducted a study which attempted to provide additional evidence regarding the effectiveness of school socialization curricula. The study investigated the hypothesis that students exposed to a relationship enhancement curriculum would increase both communication skills and self-esteem more than a control group of students not exposed to the curriculum. The study also examined the causal relationship between communication skills and self-esteem. Students from three schools in the same middle class suburban school district participated in the study. Classes from two schools received the treatment and classes from the other school served as the control group. Complete pretest and posttest data from 178 students were used in the final analyses. Self-esteem was measured by a 10-item self-

esteem scale from the Youth in Transition study (Bachman, 1970).

Communication skills were assessed by a scale developed specifically for the study that consisted of 10 multiple-choice questions. Both instruments were administered to all of the participants one week before the beginning of the treatment program and again eight weeks later. The treatment was comprised of four sessions, one per week, each lasting approximately 60 minutes. The sessions were developed and led by two junior authors under the supervision of the St. Louis Office of County Youth Programs. The results revealed that students' communication skills can be increased with a relationship enhancement program of relatively short duration. No significant grade-by-treatment interaction was identified by the study. The ineffectiveness of the relationship enhancement curricula to produce changes in self-esteem was consistent with the results of several other studies (Altmann & Firmesz, 1973; Eldridge, Barchikowski, & Witmer, 1973; Purkey, 1969). The short duration of the treatment program could have accounted for the failure of the relationship enhancement curricula to increase self-esteem. However, the correlational analyses suggested that self-esteem and communication skills are relatively independent phenomena. In addition, the analysis revealed that there was no pattern of casual predominance between self-esteem and communication skills. The authors concluded that changes in one dimension rarely generalize to changes on other dimensions. It was recommended that those teachers and/or counselors interested in increasing self-esteem need to include activities specifically designed for self-enhancement.

Cangelosi, Bressard, and Mines (1980) conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of a Rational Thinking Group on self-concept in adolescents. The participants included 33 adolescent females and 3 adolescent males from a primarily middle class high school in New Jersey. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1969) was used to measure levels of self-concept. The 36 high school students were randomly assigned to three groups, with 12 students per group. The groups included a rational thinking group, a placebo treatment group, and a no treatment group. A comparison of group means on a pretreatment administration of the P-HSCS indicated no significant difference between the groups. The senior author was the leader for the first two groups and the P-HSCS was administered to all of the participants upon completion of the groups. The results of the study indicated that the rational thinking group significantly increased the self-concept of the adolescents. However, the limitations of this study must be taken into consideration. The generalizability is limited because the participants were volunteers, mostly female, and from a predominantly upper middle class area. Furthermore, the skills and limitations of the group leader must be considered.

Calsyn, Pennell, and Harter (1984) stated that many schools have developed curricula specifically designed to aid the social development of children. These affective education curricula usually have two major goals: (a) to improve interpersonal relationships and (b) to increase self-esteem. The authors further pointed out that research on the effectiveness of affective education programs in improving the self-esteem of students has revealed as many findings of

no difference as positive findings. Lockwood (1978) reviewed values clarification approaches to affective education and concluded that four of the six studies reviewed reported positive findings. However, all four studies had serious methodological weaknesses. In addition, other studies on affective education curricula have failed to show positive effects on the self-esteem of students (Altmann & Firnesz, 1973; Ammerman & Fryrear, 1975; Calsyn, Quicke, & Harris, 1980; Eldridge, Barcikowski, & Witmer, 1973). Other studies, however, have reported positive effects of affective education programs on students' self-esteem (Calsyn & Prost, 1983; Koval & Hales, 1972; Schulman, Ford, & Busk, 1973; Stilwell & Barclay, 1979; Thomson-Rountree & Woodruff, 1981). There seems to be no consistent pattern that would explain why some studies found positive effects and others reported no effects (Calsyn, Pennell, & Harter, 1984). However, these authors did suggest that the more successful programs seem to have had more contact hours or better integration of the affective education program into the regular curriculum than did the unsuccessful programs. The authors found only four studies of affective education curricula that examined the impact of treatment-by-sex interactions on self-esteem. Studies that found no treatment-by-sex interactions include Calsyn et al. (1980) and Thomson-Rountree and Woodruff (1981). However, the studies conducted by Stilwell and Barclay (1979) and Calsyn and Prost (1983) found that the treatment had more impact on boys than on girls. None of the studies reviewed by Calsyn, Pennell, and Harter (1984) that found effects on affective education programs on self-esteem included follow-up assessment of self-esteem beyond a few weeks after the end of the program. Since little is known about the permanence of

the gains in self-esteem resulting from affective education programs, Calsyn, Pennell, and Harter designed two studies which involved follow-up assessment of self-esteem two months after the conclusion of the formal treatment program in addition to an immediate posttest administered on the last day of the treatment program. The results of the studies indicated that girls probably benefitted more from the treatment program than did boys. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that an affective education program can have an immediate, positive effect on children's self-esteem. The authors suggested that affective curricula are more likely to have significant effects if the regular classroom teacher is involved in the implementation of the program. Moreover, programs of less than 10 sessions seem to be too short to have any positive effects. It was recommended that educators need to provide specific materials and experiences for each affective education goal rather than expecting change on one affective dimension to generalize to other affective dimensions.

After a review of the literature, O'Connor (1978) pointed out that research efforts have increased the awareness of the need for students to understand and accept themselves and have demonstrated the value of self-concept theory in making the educational process more meaningful. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the selection of self-accepting teachers is critical to the development of children's self-concepts. O'Connor described a study designed to investigate the relationship between fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students' self- and ideal-self-concepts and their perceptions of their teachers' feelings toward them. The specific objectives of the study were

to (a) determine the self- and ideal-self-concept of a group of fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students; (b) determine the relationship between the self- and ideal self-concept of the three groups in regard to grade, race, and sex; (c) determine students' perceptions of their teachers' feelings toward them; and (d) determine the relationship between the self- and ideal-self-concept of the three grade groupings and students' perceptions of their teachers' feelings toward them considering the effects of grade, sex, and race. The population for the study included 123 females and 126 males enrolled in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades of three elementary schools and one middle school in a northern Florida school district. Participating classrooms were selected on the basis of heterogeneous grouping within the classroom, cooperation from the classroom teacher, and pupil willingness to participate. The Lipsitt Self-Concept Scale (1958) was used to measure the discrepancy between self-concept and ideal self or the degree of self-dissatisfaction expressed by the subject. The Davidson and Lange Adjective Checklist (Davidson & Lange, 1960), which consists of 35 behavioral traits, was used to measure the subjects' perceptions of teachers' feelings toward the student. Demographic information, including grade, sex, and race, was also obtained for each subject. Statistical procedures did not reveal significant relationships among either race or grade variables between measures of self-concept and the ideal self (discrepancy scores) and the index of favorability scores of their teachers' feelings toward them. However, an analysis of variance did indicate that the race variable was significant at the .05 level. Results from the analyses suggested that pre-adolescent students do experience self-

dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the sixth-grade students from the sample had the highest discrepancy scores with regard to self-dissatisfaction. Moreover, this study found no correlation between how students saw themselves and how they perceived their teachers' feelings toward them. An implication of the study, pointed out by the author, was that the findings and trends seemed to suggest that current orientation programs for students moving from elementary schools to middle school may be inadequate and/or ineffective.

Dobson, Campbell, and Dobson (1982) reviewed the current literature and contended that positive self-concepts are related to positive attitudes toward school and positive attitudes are related to school success. They also stated that self-concept is related to societal conditions such as changes. To further investigate these contentions, the authors conducted a study to determine the relationship among self-concept, perceptions of school, and life changes. The research questions formulated for the study were (a) what is the relationship among self-concept, life change units, satisfaction with school, commitment to classwork, and reactions to teachers; and (b) what percent of variance in self-concept can be accounted for by life change units, satisfaction with school commitment to classwork, and reactions to teachers? Ninety-six students attending fourth and fifth grades in four central and north central Oklahoma communities were administered three instruments. Parent permission was obtained for the testing and the instruments were administered by self-contained teachers over a period of three days. The Self-Concept Scale for Children (Lipsitt, 1958) was selected as a means for obtaining self-concept data. The Life Event

Record (Coddington, 1972; Holmes & Masuda, 1970; Holmes & Rahe, 1967a, 1967b) was used for quantifying the significance of various life events. The Quality of School Life Scale (Epstein & McPartland, 1978) measured students' reactions to school life. The results of the study indicated that there was some influence of the students' adjustment to life events and the quality of the classroom environment created or supported by teachers, but the influence on self-concept was small when compared to the quality of the students' social experiences with peers and teachers. The authors concluded that the negative relationship between self-concept scores and Life Change Units should be considered as educators deal with the impact of change and its relationship to students and their school experiences. Furthermore, educators must be informed that the quality of students' school experiences are significant predictors of self-concept. Lastly, since there is a positive relationship between students' self-concepts and their perceptions, school counselors, teachers, and principals must continue with their efforts to personalize school experiences.

Attitudes Toward School

✓ According to Mager (1968), attitude is a general tendency of an individual to act in a certain way under certain conditions. He further described an attitude as a predisposition to approach or avoid a given object, event, or idea. Moreover, a positive attitude is reflected by a student's tendency to initiate contact with the attitudinal object while a negative attitude is demonstrated by the student's tendency to avoid contact whenever possible. According to

Wagner (1969), attitudes are composed of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components which correspond to beliefs, feelings, and actions toward the object of the attitude.

Mager (1968) suggested that attitudes toward school subjects will affect subsequent behaviors toward those subjects. Furthermore, students with positive attitudes will have a greater tendency to use what they have learned and to engage in related activities later in life.

Attitude formation and change is possible in schools because attitudes are learned (Zembaro, Ebbesen, & Maslack, 1977). In support of this, Johnston and Markle (1979) contended that attitudes are the result of learning experiences in the home, community, and school. Some attitudes are firmly established by the time students reach middle school; however, middle school educators can have a profound effect on student attitudes. Classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and modeling are the three ways described by Johnston and Markle that middle school educators influence student attitudes. Classical conditioning develops positive attitudes when an initially neutral or negative object is paired with one that elicits a positive reaction. When the neutral object begins to elicit a positive reaction on its own, the conditioning is completed. This theory suggests that associating subjects with favorable learning experiences will result in more positive attitudes toward the subject. The second theory, operant learning, is based upon the assumption that behavior is controlled by its consequences. According to this theory, attitudes that result in positive reinforcement are more likely to be developed than attitudes that result in punishment. Modeling is the

third approach to developing positive attitudes among middle school students. According to this theory, many student attitudes may be formed by observing the response of others to an object or event. For example, students are more likely to develop more positive attitudes toward a subject if the teacher enjoys and is enthusiastic about the subject being taught. Attitudes modeled and reinforced by a student's peer group may also exert great influence on students' attitudes.

Disonance theory was suggested by Johnston and Markle (1979) as a different approach to changing student attitudes. According to this theory, an individual strives for consistency among his/her beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and behavior. This theory suggests that awareness of inconsistencies will cause an individual to become psychologically uncomfortable; therefore, the individual will strive to reduce the inconsistency when the aversive state results. The authors proclaimed that by applying attitude change techniques systematically, the chances of developing positive attitudes among middle school students can be enhanced.

Lounsbury (1984) pointed out that the critical point in students' attitude toward school seems to be during the middle school years. This author described a recent study of 8,000 young adolescents (grades 5-9) which found that the greatest decrease in interest occurs between the fifth and seventh grades.

Purkey (1970) declared that student behavior is significantly affected by student attitude. Furthermore, the attitudes which students have regarding their contemporaries, teachers, and school are essential elements in those interactions and as such are pervasive in all human behavior.

Thornburg (1980) discussed several issues to be considered in conducting adolescent attitude research. He stated that an attitude is an emotional predisposition for a person to act in some way toward another person, object, or ideal. Furthermore, there is, typically, a correlation between attitude and behavior, but this does not mean that such attitudes mirror the behavior (Mischel, 1968; Thornburg, 1973). According to Latvak (1969) and Zajonc (1968), attitudes may be learned through direct stimulus presentation, incidentally, through unplanned exposure to others, and by experience. Bandura (1969) suggested that attitudes may best be learned by modeling. Thornburg (1980) contended that systematic attitudinal research is lacking but may be achieved through more emphasis on appropriate scale construction. He further suggested that researchers of adolescents must consider what is being assessed and whether it is primarily an outcome of the adolescent's cognitive, affective, or behavioral domain. Thornburg recommended that those who become involved in attitudinal research with adolescents should consider certain points. These include (a) future research must experiment with more systematic ways to assess attitudes, (b) researchers should focus more attention on the relationship of expressed attitudes and actual behavior, (c) researchers must decide which component (cognitive, affective, or behavioral) to evaluate the adolescent, (d) scaling techniques should be explored in great detail, (e) scales must be meaningful to youth, and (6) researchers must consider the external variables that might affect the outcomes.

Chase (1981) reported the conclusions of a questionnaire developed by the National Study of School Evaluation. Respondents to

the survey included 10,478 students in 22 states representing 25 school systems across the United States. The results indicated that a majority of secondary school students are "proud" of their schools, have a sense of belonging, and believe that teachers "care" whether they learn. However, their feelings regarding school administrators were less positive. Lack of help from counselors in solving personal problems was another source of dissatisfaction. Overall, the data reflected "considerably more positive than negative feelings toward high school on the part of students" (p. 526). However, a significant number of students responded negatively to those items that the majority rated positively. These figures indicated that one student in six was not proud of school and that "more than one in five did not feel that teachers cared whether students learn" (p. 526). Two out of five students indicated negative feelings toward school administrators and "one out of three was unhappy with school counseling services" (p. 526). In summary, the data from this study seemed to indicate that the secondary school experience is not a negative one for most students. However, students feel that teachers, school counselors, and administrators fail to take a strong interest in them as individuals.

Hedelin and Sjoberg (1985) investigated how students in Sweden change their attitudes toward school and particular school subjects during their elementary years. A common problem recognized as a result of this study was that in all of the Western democracies, students' attitudes become increasingly negative by the time they reach ninth grade. Large samples of students in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 were asked about their feelings of well-being while in school; about their interest in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and about

their perceptions of their personal relationships with their teachers. The results of the survey indicated that students maintained their interest in reading and writing and steadily became more negative about everything else. The largest drops occurred between the fifth and seventh grades. In discussing this study, Berliner (1985) suggested that students' perceptions of personal interactions were important in determining their attitudes toward school. He further stated that the nature and frequency of the teacher's interaction with the students do not directly influence student achievement, but they do influence the student's self-esteem. Attitudes toward school and school subjects were positive among students with high self-esteem and feelings of well-being. Berliner pointed out that the outcome of this study is that achievement in most of the Western democracies is probably determined by attitudes as well as by ability. He further suggested that unless students feel successful, hold high self-esteem, and have feelings of well-being when in school, achievement is not likely.

Metcalf (1981) conducted a research study to determine the (a) possible relationship between self-concept and attitude to school, (b) possible changes in students' self-concepts as a result of transferring from primary to secondary school, and (c) possible difference in the attitudes to school of students with high self-concepts compared to those with low self-concepts. A total of 88 boys and 94 girls from schools in a North of England conurbation participated in this experimental study. The experimental group was comprised of 70 boys and 65 girls aged 11+ years, who were in their final term at one junior high school. The control group was comprised

of 18 boys and 29 girls aged 11+ years, who were in the third term of their second year at a middle school. Both groups were judged to be socio-economically similar on the basis of parental occupations. The two instruments used in the investigation were (a) the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1969) and (b) the Attitude to School Questionnaire (Barker Lunn cited in Metcalfe, 1981). The proposed hypotheses were that (a) there would be significant differences in the mean self-concept scores of children tested in their final year of primary school and again after one year of secondary school; (b) there would be a significant increase in the mean self-concept scores of children with low self-concepts in their final year of primary school and the same children retested a year later at secondary school; (c) the difference in mean self-concept score at first and second testing, for children with high self-concept scores at primary school, would be significantly different from any corresponding difference in the remainder of the sample; and (d) there would be a significant difference in the attitudes to school of children with high self-concepts and those with low self-concepts. Metcalfe concluded that no significant differences were detected in the mean self-concept scores for the experimental group of boys and the experimental group of girls between the first and second testings. Although both boys and girls in the top quartile for self-concept obtained significantly lower scores at the second testing when the students were divided into high or low self-concept scorers, girls in the bottom quartile at the first testing obtained significantly higher scores at the second testing. Significant differences were found

in the attitudes to school of students who held high positive self-concepts compared to those who held low self-concepts.

McGee and Krajewski (1979) described a three-year project-evaluation study that was conducted in the J.B. Brown Middle School in Hamilton County, Tennessee, during a three-year period (1974-1977). The total school program was viewed through (a) faculty, student, parent, and principal interviews; (b) classroom and team meetings and planning sessions; (c) review of materials, programs, schedules, and guides; and (d) generally collecting and analyzing as much data relating to the objectives as possible. Conclusions were reported on for eleven areas that represented the total school program. Student attitudes were measured during the second and third years by the Tennessee Student Survey which was administered to a random group of eighth-grade students in all of the county schools. Student attitudes toward teachers, the school experience, and the value of education are measured by this instrument. The results indicated that the J.B. Brown Middle School's student attitude mean score dropped slightly in 1976-1977. However, student attitudes did not show correlation with student discipline incidences.

Riester and Tanner (1980) pointed out that although group counseling is available to students, there have been few long-term follow-up studies to determine if this counseling approach is effective. These authors conducted a study to obtain follow-up information from junior and senior high school students who had participated in group counseling during their elementary school years. A school district that had an established group counseling program designed for students with problems in the interpersonal area and

negative feelings about school was selected for the study. The students' perceptions of the effectiveness of their group experience were evaluated in relation to the formulated goals of the group. The sample was comprised of 60 students in junior and senior high schools within a school district that had provided weekly group counseling sessions for them during their third, fourth, and fifth grades. These students were asked to complete a questionnaire designed to assess their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the group counseling experience in helping them achieve the primary group goals: (a) improvement of interpersonal relationships, (b) development of problem-solving skills, and (c) improvement of attitudes toward school. The questionnaire also asked them to report whether or not the group was helpful in improving their grades and their relationships with their parents. Of the sample, 15 were individually interviewed. The participants included students from a wide range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds and academic levels. The results of the study suggested that the students perceived the group counseling experiences as effective in improving interpersonal skills with peers and teachers. Furthermore, the experience was viewed as helpful in developing a more positive attitude toward school. Implications of the study were (a) evaluation of group counseling effectiveness must be in relationship to the formulated goals of the group, (b) group counseling should be considered for students with interpersonal problems and negative attitudes toward the school, (c) factors perceived by students as reasons for positive changes can be further studied for application in the classroom, (d) group counseling to attain competence in personal and social relations and

problem solving should be considered, and (e) group counseling activities should be implemented after knowledge and skills are mastered by the group leader. The authors concluded that two to eight years after termination of school-based group counseling, the majority of the participants reported that the group was influential in attaining the stated group goals, which were to develop peer and adult interpersonal skills and a positive attitude toward school.

After a review of the professional literature, Myrick and Dixon (1985) pointed out that counselor intervention with students who have negative attitudes toward school has been a neglected topic for several years. They further reported that the few studies on the topic lacked adequate experimental design and provided little evidence that school counselors were effective in changing negative attitudes and related behaviors. These authors identified a need for (a) more counselors to report data regarding their effectiveness with students displaying negative school attitudes, (b) the data to come from carefully designed experimental studies, and (c) school counselors to describe the counseling procedures they used. Myrick and Dixon discussed a study, which was conducted in Orange County, Florida, which responded to these needs. Thirteen school counselors participated in the study that focused on students with negative attitudes toward school. The population for the study was drawn by each school counselor identifying 12 students in grades 5 and 6, from their respective schools, whose attitudes needed improvement. The students were identified by reviewing school records and consulting with teachers. Six of the students were randomly assigned to participate in a series of group counseling sessions and

the other six served as a comparison group. The counselor intervention involved a series of six, small-group counseling sessions which were carefully outlined and practiced by the school counselors prior to the intervention. Each session lasted about 30-45 minutes. A classroom behavior checklist to rate the students in the study was used by their teachers. A second instrument was given only to those students who participated in the group sessions. The students were asked to report their perceptions of the group experience on a six-item, Likert-type scale. Data were provided by 10 school counselors and completed by 118 students. The results indicated that students who participated in the group counseling sessions improved their classroom behavior significantly more than those who did not participate. Furthermore, the results showed that group counseling was effective across sex of students and schools, suggesting that both boys and girls benefitted regardless of school or counselor. The follow-up data received from 42 students indicated that 72% reported that the group increased their understanding of themselves, 82% said it helped them gain a better understanding of others, 62% indicated that the experience helped change their behavior outside the group, and 60% said that they liked school better as a result of the group. The authors concluded that positive attitudes about school and about achieving behaviors in the classroom are seen as essential if students are to learn effectively and efficiently and this study demonstrated that school counselors can help. Furthermore, the series of structured group sessions proved to be effective, students liked the group experience, and they were aware of positive changes in

themselves. Lastly, teachers reported favorable differences in student classroom behavior as a result of the group experience.

In another study, Myrick, Merhill, and Swanson (1986) asserted that attitudes about school, self, and others affect student learning. It was further suggested that helping students develop positive attitudes is an objective of school guidance programs and students with negative school attitudes are often referred to school counselors for special attention. However, it was also pointed out that published research regarding counselor intervention effectiveness with students displaying negative attitudes is scarce. In response to this need, the authors described studies conducted in Florida and Indiana which provided data regarding the effectiveness of a classroom guidance unit led by school counselors on student attitudes. In Orange County, Florida, fourth-grade students were the identified population for the project. Two fourth-grade classrooms in each of the 67 elementary schools were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. The control group classrooms received the treatment intervention after the study was completed. Teachers rated each student's attitude on a scale of 1-7, with 7 being very positive. Counselors used the ratings to rank students in the classes and to identify "target" students and "top" students. "Target" students were those who ranked among the six lowest in the class regarding their attitudes. The "top" students were those who ranked among the four highest in the class. The purpose of the study was to provide data that would help answer these questions: (a) can a counselor-led developmental classroom guidance unit have a positive impact on student attitudes and behaviors, (b) will "target" students improve as

a result of the guidance unit, and (c) will "top" students benefit as a result of the guidance unit? The classroom guidance unit consisted of 30-45 minute sessions focusing on the following topics: (a) Understanding Feelings and Behaviors, (b) Attitude Glasses, (c) Helping Someone New to School, (d) Making Positive Changes, (e) I Am Lovable and Capable, and (f) Looking for Personal Strengths. Two additional sessions were included for evaluation purposes. Since there were no published standardized instruments adequate for the study, one-page inventories based on Likert-type scales were developed by the school counselors and consultants. Schools were assigned to blocks within a Solomon Block Four Research Design through the use of a table of random numbers. One-half of the schools administered the inventories as a pretest and posttest, whereas the other half administered the inventories as a posttest only. School counselors received training in the guidance unit, participated in randomization procedures, and received information packets with timelines, inventories, and guidelines for the study during a one-day workshop. Periodical meetings of the school counselors were held to monitor and review their progress. Data were provided by 37 schools and came from inventories completed by students and teachers. The results of the study were examined in terms of "target" and "top" students and a comparison of treatment and control groups. Data from student and teacher inventories provided perspectives of both students and teachers. The results indicated that significant differences were found in favor of "target" students who participated in the guidance unit when comparing the student and teacher inventories. In addition, positive results were reported for "top" students by both students and

teachers. The Indiana study was a replication of the Florida project. In that study, 25 school counselors and their schools volunteered to participate. Efforts were made to follow the same procedures as used in Florida. The results of the two studies were similar and confirmed the value of the classroom guidance unit. The Indiana study also provided evidence that the unit can be effective when used in different school districts and in different states. The authors concluded that (a) developmental classroom guidance units can be used in school as a means for improving student attitudes and behaviors, (b) classroom guidance might be a first strategy for working with target students, (c) collaborative accountability studies are an effective means to evaluate school counselor interventions and obtain higher visibility with the public, and (d) there is a need to develop more counselor interventions for specific student populations that can be replicated by school counselors in different school systems. Furthermore, a classroom guidance unit can maximize the use of school counselor time, and students, other than targeted students, can also benefit from classroom guidance interventions.

The "Me in Mental Health" Unit

The "Me in Mental Health" classroom guidance unit was compiled by the Mental Health Association of Minnesota and revised by the Alachua County, Florida, School District middle school counselors for use in this study. The unit was based on the assumption that a healthy self-concept is vital to maintaining good mental health and that there are certain things that can be done to improve and maintain mental health. The purpose of the "Me in Mental Health" classroom unit is to help

filmstrips, "Personality and Mental Health--How to Like Yourself" (Sunburst Communications, 1978). These filmstrips identify stress as an integral part of living and explain that the way to good mental health is in coping with stress, not avoiding it. They also provide guidelines for helping students distinguish between problems they can handle on their own and problems for which they should seek help. The unit was designed to be presented in six 45-minute sessions. The sessions may be presented 45-minutes per week for six weeks or 45-minutes a day for six days. The program may be presented by school counselors, teachers, volunteers, or other trained and qualified personnel.

The "Me in Mental Health" Leaders Guide (Mental Health Association of Minnesota, 1983) includes a brief section describing the purpose of the program, a synopsis, program objectives, presentation notes, and a section on introductory thoughts for conducting each of the sessions (see Appendix A). Instructions for student worksheets and handouts are also included. Suggestions for class projects, additional activities, quotes for posters, and additional resources are also included in the Leaders Guide. Two sessions were added to the program for this research study to gather evaluation data.

The Mental Health Association of Minnesota is a division of the National Mental Health Association, a nationwide, voluntary, nonprofit, nongovernmental organization dedicated to the prevention of mental illness, the promotion of mental health, and the improved care and treatment of the mentally ill (Mental Health Association

seventh-grade students think about who they are, about who they want to become, and about how to accept the person "where they are" at any given time and to help them develop a positive self-image that will last into their future.

"Self-image is the picture we each have of ourselves which sets the boundaries of our accomplishments. It is how we feel about ourselves and how much we like ourselves. It affects every aspect of behavior—our ability to learn, our capacity to grow and change, our choice of friends and careers" (Mental Health Association of Minnesota, 1983, p. 1). Defining the topic was the first step in the development process of the "Me in Mental Health" unit. After a review of pertinent literature, collaboration with professional consultants, and based upon several years of teaching experience at the middle/junior high school level, Jane Harris, Director of Education, Mental Health Association of Minnesota, assumed the responsibility for compiling the classroom guidance unit. The objectives of the "Me in Mental Health" unit include (a) to encourage students to make an honest appraisal of who they are and what they have the potential to become, and to accept and like themselves; (b) to assist young people in developing an identity that is strong enough to withstand the pressures they are now facing and will face as they mature; (c) to challenge students to explore their relationships with people around them--peers, parents, and teachers; (d) to help students realize that they are not alone in their feelings, problems, and concerns; and (e) to show students that help and support are there if and when they need it.

The "Me in Mental Health" program (revised 1986) is a six-session classroom guidance unit which begins and ends with two

of Minnesota, 1983). The "Me in Mental Health" unit was distributed to other county mental health chapters and state mental health divisions.

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

Investigated were the effects of the "Me in Mental Health" structured classroom group guidance unit on the self-concepts and attitudes toward school of seventh-grade students. A nonrandomized, control group, pretest-posttest research design was used.

The experimental treatment consisted of six structured classroom group guidance sessions presented by middle school counselors during seventh-grade social studies classes. Two additional sessions were used for evaluation purposes. Control groups were used for comparisons. The following dependent variables were studied: self-concept, motivation for schooling, academic self-concept (performance-based), academic self-concept (reference-based), sense of control over performance, and instructional mastery. Independent variables included gender, race, school, and experimental and control groups.

Population

The population for this study included seventh-grade students enrolled in the School District of Alachua County, Florida. Alachua County is located in the north central part of Florida and has a population of 175,000. Much of Alachua County is rural, with the largest population center being the city of Gainesville. This city is

the site of the University of Florida, the largest university in the state.

In the 1985-86 academic year, the Alachua County School District included 22,712 students in grades kindergarten through 12 (Department of Research and Evaluation, 1986). Of these students, 16,504 attended schools within the city of Gainesville. The remaining 6,208 students attended schools in the outlying areas of Alachua County. The total number of seventh-grade students in the Alachua County Schools was 1,777. There were approximately 855 (49%) females and 922 (51%) males. Of these, 1161 (66%) were Caucasian and 616 (34%) were of other races (Department of Research and Evaluation, 1986).

The population for this study consisted of eight, seventh-grade social studies classroom groups from the following four schools: Fort Clarke Middle School, Howard Bishop Middle School, Lincoln Middle School, and Westwood Middle School. All of the middle schools were composed of grades 6 through 8. Their populations were racially integrated and the percentage of females and males was about equal.

The seventh-grade student population by race for each of the participating schools is shown in Table 3-1. The seventh-grade population by sex is displayed in Table 3-2.

Sample Selection

Seventh-grade students were assigned to social studies classes by grade level at the beginning of the school year. Student enrollment determined how many classes were at each grade and how many

Table 3-1

Seventh-Grade Student Population by Race, Alachua County,
Florida, School District, 1985-86

School	Caucasian	Other
Fort Clarke	193	103
Howard Bishop	204	117
Lincoln	196	135
Westwood	193	97

Source: Department of Research and Evaluation, Alachua County School District, Gainesville, FL, 1986.

Table 3-2

Seventh-Grade Student Population by Sex, Alachua County,
Florida, School District, 1985-86

School	Female	Male	Total
Fort Clarke	143	153	295
Howard Bishop	172	150	322
Lincoln	163	168	331
Westwood	130	160	290

Source: Department of Research and Evaluation, Alachua County School District, Gainesville, FL, 1986.

teachers were needed to teach these classes. The size of the social studies classes varied among the schools, but efforts were made to keep the class size as low as possible. In this study, each social studies classroom group had approximately 25 students per group.

To avoid disrupting normal school functioning, intact seventh-grade social studies classroom groups were selected from a generated pool of potential seventh-grade social studies classes. Social studies classes were selected for three reasons. First, all seventh-grade students were required to take social studies. These classes are often used for classroom guidance activities so that every seventh-grade student can be reached. Thus, the external validity of the study was strengthened because the setting was similar to that normally used for classroom group guidance activities. Second, the time period for the social studies classes coincided with the time period needed for the classroom group guidance sessions. Conducting the study in these classes provided a convenient opportunity to examine the effects of the "Me in Mental Health" unit on the self-concepts and attitudes toward school of seventh-grade students.

This study used eight intact seventh-grade social studies classroom groups, with two groups from each of the four participating schools. A pool of potential seventh-grade social studies classes was generated by interviewing the seventh-grade social studies teachers in each school to determine which classroom groups would be allowed to participate in the study. Two intact, social studies classroom groups, one control and one treatment group, were randomly selected by

drawing from the pool of potential participating groups in each school. The first classroom group drawn was the experimental group and the second was the control group. Two other classroom groups were drawn as alternates for the experimental and control groups. In the event that the experimental or control group could not participate in the study, alternates were used. The remaining seventh-grade social studies classroom groups in the classroom group pool in each school remained on a reserve list and also were used as alternates if needed.

Because each seventh-grade social studies classroom group had approximately 25 students per group, the sample consisted of eight, intact classroom groups (approximately 300 seventh-grade students) from the four participating middle/junior high schools.

Research Design

The nonrandomized control-group pretest-posttest design (Isaac & Michael, 1979) was used in this study. This design controls for most of the threats to internal validity. A control group ensures against mistaking effects of history, pretesting, maturation, and instrumentation for treatment main effects. Mortality effects are controlled by comparing pretest and posttest assessments.

This design had some practical advantages because it dealt with intact classes and did not disrupt school programs. Furthermore, it was easier to conduct without the subjects being aware of it than if the subjects had been randomly assigned to treatment groups.

The research design is illustrated in Figure 3-1.

	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
E ₁	T ₁ , T ₂	X	T ₁ , T ₂
C ₁	T ₁ , T ₂		T ₁ , T ₂

X = Treatment (The "Me in Mental Health" unit)

T₁ = Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale

T₂ = School Attitude Measure

Figure 3-1. Nonrandomized Control Group Pretest-Posttest Design

Experimental Treatment

Each of the schools serving seventh-grade students in the Alachua County School District had one or more school counselors, all of whom had two or more years of counseling experience with seventh-grade students as well as classroom group guidance experience. School counselors in each of the four participating schools indicated a willingness to conduct the "Me in Mental Health" classroom group guidance unit with the designated seventh-grade social studies classes in their settings.

Implementation of the "Me in Mental Health" unit was a cooperatively planned project. The Mental Health Association of Minnesota provided the original copies of the instructional materials and permission to duplicate them. The Alachua County Mental Health Association, in cooperation with the Alachua County Community Education Program, provided the appropriate number of copies for

each school of the necessary instructional materials and the audio-visual materials. Assistance with dissemination of the materials and orientation of the middle school counselors to the "Me in Mental Health" unit also was provided by the Alachua County Mental Health Association.

Orientation and Training

In order to standardize the implementation of the treatment, the participating middle school counselors attended an orientation/training session. During this meeting, the middle school counselors were introduced to the project, its purposes, and expectations, and received an overview of the classroom guidance unit. Leader instructional manuals containing a description of session format and directions, copies of all handouts, and instructional materials were provided for each participant (see Appendix A). The orientation/training session allowed the middle school counselors an opportunity to review materials and ask questions. The researcher, with assistance from the Executive Director of the Alachua County Mental Health Association, conducted the orientation/training session.

Prior to the meeting, middle school counselors from the participating schools were asked to interview the seventh-grade social studies teachers in their respective schools and to bring a list of the potential participating social studies classes. The school counselors were paired and a school counselor from one school drew the participating classroom groups for another school.

Two intact, seventh-grade social studies classroom groups, one treatment and one control group, were randomly selected from each school.

Classroom Group Guidance Intervention

The "Me in Mental Health" classroom group guidance unit consisted of group sessions once each week for eight consecutive weeks. Each session was 45 minutes in length. The first two sessions were used to administer the pretests. The next six sessions were used for presentation of the classroom guidance unit and for collecting post-evaluation data. The sessions were held in the classroom areas normally used for the social studies classes.

Classroom Group Guidance Unit Sessions

Each of the activities used in the group sessions were structured. Specific topics for each session and lead-in information for each activity were included. Directions for activities, use of audio-visual materials, and student handouts were provided.

Session one included a brief introduction of the study and the administration of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1969) to gather pretest data. The second session included the administration of the School Attitude Measure (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980) to obtain additional pretest data. The control groups were administered the two instruments during the same week as the treatment groups (see Appendix A).

Session three included an introduction to students regarding the "Me in Mental Health" unit. The middle school counselors explained the schedule and procedures to be followed during the sessions. Students then processed the first activity which focused on the importance of self-esteem and how it relates to being mentally healthy. This session included Part I of the filmstrip "Personality and Mental Health--How to Like Yourself" (Sunburst Communications, 1978), the student handout "You Are Special," discussion questions, and a thought for the day (see Appendix A).

The first activity in session four focused on feelings. Students were asked to vote, by raising their hands, to indicate if they had experienced the feelings which were read aloud by the middle school counselors. The second activity involved dividing the classes into small groups. The middle school counselors divided the classes by counting the students and assigning them to one of five groups. The school counselors presented each group with one "feeling" (word) to discuss and then allowed each group to share briefly with the entire class. The third activity involved the completion of a worksheet focusing on ways of dealing with feelings. The session closed with a thought for the day (see Appendix A).

Session five began with a "How Do You See Yourself" activity. It included discussion questions and a self-assessment worksheet that focused on how people see themselves in relation to others. A sentence completion and class discussion activity on strengths and limitations were presented. A thought for the day ended the session (see Appendix A).

A small group exercise began session six. The middle school counselors divided the classes by counting them 1 to 5 and assigning students to a small group of five. Each received a set of questions on peer groups to discuss and report back to the class. A worksheet, asking students to express their views on the importance of the listed items, was presented. A "positive feedback" activity was conducted by having the students write a positive statement on labels about each student in their group. Cards with each student's name were passed around and the labels were placed on the respective cards. A thought for the day completed the session (see Appendix A).

The seventh session started with a brief discussion regarding positive and negative feedback (see Appendix A). Part II of the filmstrip "Personality and Mental Health--How to Like Yourself" (Sunburst Communications, 1978) was presented and time was allowed for brief discussion. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was administered to gather posttest data.

During the eighth session, the treatment groups were administered the School Attitude Measure (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980). An evaluation worksheet for the "Me in Mental Health" unit was completed by the Students. Copies of the "Hooray for Me" and parent pamphlets were distributed and a thought for the day ended the session (see Appendix A). After evaluation materials were collected, and if time allowed, the school counselors led discussions on follow-up activities and class projects. Control groups were also administered the School Attitude Measure and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale during the same week.

Throughout the activities included in the "Me in Mental Health" unit, students were provided with information. In the classroom group sessions, opportunities for discussion, questions, and practice were provided to help students develop more positive self-concepts and attitudes toward school.

During the treatment sessions, the control groups continued with normal social studies classroom activities. However, these groups were provided an opportunity to participate in the "Me in Mental Health" unit after the data for this study had been collected.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used to measure the effects of the "Me in Mental Health" classroom group guidance unit on the self-concepts and attitudes toward school of seventh-grade students. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (P-HSCS) (Piers & Harris, 1969) focused on general self-concept assessment.

The School Attitude Measure (SAM) (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980) assessed motivation for schooling, academic self-concept (performance-based), academic self-concept (reference-based), sense of control over performance, and students' instructional mastery.

Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale

The P-HSCS (Piers & Harris, 1969) was developed as a measure of general self-concept. It is a 15-20 minute self-report instrument designed for children over a wide age range. The 80-item declarative

statement test is appropriate for students in grades 3 through 12. It requires approximately a third-grade reading knowledge; however, it may be read to younger or academically handicapped students.

Students respond to the statements (e.g., "I am a happy person," or "I am cheerful") with a yes or no answer. Half of the items are worded in a negative content (e.g., "I behave badly at home") and the other half are worded in a positive content (e.g., "I have good ideas"). The 80 items were derived from a preliminary pool of 164 children from the third, fourth, and sixth grades in a small school district. The test was later standardized with 1,183 students in grades 4 through 12 in a large school system in Pennsylvania. A cross section of economic levels were represented, and slow, average, and bright students participated. There were no apparent sex or grade differences in the mean scores. However, the scores of the students in the slow classes were lower, as anticipated by the authors. No differences in regard to race were indicated.

The validity and reliability of the instrument are described in the administration manual (Piers & Harris, 1969). The internal consistency of the test ranges from .78 to .93, and retest reliability, after four months, ranges from .71 to .77. The test correlates with other instruments (e.g., Lipsitt's Children's Self-Concept, SRA Junior Inventory) at a median of .65.

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was selected as a measure of self-concept in this study because of its wide use in research with regular education students. The readability and ease of administration with seventh-grade students were factors also considered in the selection.

School Attitude Measure (SAM)

The SAM is a self-report survey instrument developed by Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division in 1980. The instrument was designed to provide evaluation of students' affective response to their school experiences. There are three levels of the instrument which provide for continuous measurement for students in grades 4 through 12. Each level has one form available in a non-consumable format; however, the same machine scorable answer sheet may be used for all forms.

Level 7-8 contains 85 items and is the recommended level for seventh-grade students. This level was used in this study. Approximately 35 minutes is needed to administer the instrument. The reading difficulty for Level 7-8 is fifth-sixth grade.

Many school counselors feel they can identify those students who are motivated and positive about school. However, there have been few instruments developed to help school counselors verify their impressions of students' attitudes within the school setting or help them examine students' attitudes with regard to the dimensions of school experiences. According to Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division (1980), students' early school experiences result in the development of positive and negative attitudes toward school. These responses lead to the perception that students form of themselves as learners which can be as important for school success as cognitive ability and academic preparedness.

In the early development stage of the School Attitude Measure, eight basic domains were identified. The authors later reduced the number of attitude scales to the following five: motivation for

schooling, academic self-concept (performance-based), academic self-concept (reference-based), student's sense of control over performance, and student's instructional mastery. For each area, content specifications were developed as a guide in writing the items. The format selected was a declarative statement design regarding students' response to school life. A four-point, scaled response ranging from "never agree" to "always agree" was chosen. To avoid response sets, to increase the likelihood of independent response, and to avoid mechanical responses, items were divided between those with positive and negative stems.

The School Attitude Measure was standardized during the fall of the 1979-80 school year (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980). In phase one of the national standardization sampling process, school districts were randomly selected to represent the national population in regard to geographic region, socioeconomic status, and school district size. In the second phase of the sampling process, schools were randomly selected from the districts identified in the first phase. Approximately 28,300 students were tested in the fall standardization. Both private and public schools were represented in the sample.

Analyses and studies on the SAM indicate that the test items have been written to eliminate sexism and minority bias. The reliability estimates for internal consistency range from .91 to .95 for the total test and for test-retest (four weeks apart) from .80 to .89. These estimates were derived from extensive field testing. Strong convergent validity of specific subscales with other instruments

that test only one aspect of affective development is substantiated by validity studies (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980).

There are five attitude scales included in the School Attitude Measure. The first scale is motivation for schooling. Statements comprising this scale are concerned with the effect of the students' reactions to past school experience upon their motivation in school. How hard students want to work in school, how highly they value school, and how much they want to pursue further schooling are all influenced by the way they have come to feel about their total school experience. Included in this scale are items related to the student's willingness to participate in current school experience because it is meaningful, desire to perform competently in future school experience, perception of the relationship of current schooling to future needs, willingness to pursue future schooling, and perception of the way individuals significant to the student view the student's school experience.

Academic self-concept (performance-based) is the second scale. Students' confidence in their academic abilities and their feelings about their school performance are the statements of concern in this scale. Success or lack of success in school can be contributed to students' feeling about their academic abilities. Items included in this scale are related to the student's perception of ability to do a majority of school tasks competently, feeling of importance as a member of the class, reaction to poor performance, expectation of success, involvement or withdrawal in school tasks, and confidence in efforts.

Statements in the third scale, academic self-concept (reference-based), are concerned with how students think other people (teachers, family, friends) feel about the students' school performance and ability to succeed academically. Included in this scale are items related to students' perception of the discrepancy between performance in school and the expectations of others, perception of the consistency of others' views and own expectations about school performance, willingness to discuss school performance with significant others, and comparison of current performance with appropriate reference groups.

The fourth scale is students' sense of control over performance. Students' feelings about being able to exercise control over situations that affect them at school and to take responsibility for the outcome of relevant school events are the statements of concern in this scale. Included in this scale are items related to the students' perception of ability as opposed to luck or fate, willingness to take responsibility for school outcomes, awareness of the relationship between actions and outcomes of schooling, self-reliance, and independence in the school setting.

Statements in the fifth scale, students' instructional mastery, are concerned with students' feelings. This scale asks students to report the state of their actual school skills. There are certain skills that all students need in order to organize school life and to succeed in school. Items in this scale reflect these skills and include evaluation of students' ability to use school time effectively and efficiently, persistence in instructional

tasks, ability to focus attention or concentrate on instructional tasks, ability to seek and use feedback, and ability to evaluate own work.

Data Collection

The data collection process involved the administration of two instruments: (a) the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1969) and (b) the School Attitude Measure (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980). Both treatment and control groups were administered the tests during the same week. The P-HSCS was administered during the first and seventh sessions of the classroom guidance unit. The SAM was administered during the second and eighth sessions. Treatment groups were tested in the same groups and same areas that they were assigned for treatment. Control groups were tested during their regular social studies class period and in the areas where the classes normally met. The middle school counselors who led the experimental groups conducted the evaluation for both groups and administered the instruments as designed and intended.

Student responses to the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale were recorded in a test booklet. Answers were indicated by the students circling a yes or no answer to each statement. Machine-scorable answer sheets were used to record student responses to the School Attitude Measure. This format was familiar to the students in Alachua County. The Alachua County School District testing program and the state assessment program utilizes machine-scorable answer forms. Thus, the seventh-grade students were experienced in filling

in bubbles for responding to questions from a test booklet onto an answer sheet.

The data collected by the participating middle school counselors were placed in prelabeled packages and returned to the researcher. The school counselors also provided classroom listings of the groups indicating the name of the participating school and the gender and race of each participant.

Experimental Procedures

This study took place over a 12-week period. The following timelines and procedures were followed:

1. During the month of August, 1986, the researcher surveyed the Alachua County middle school counselors and identified those willing to participate in the study.

2. The participating school counselors were invited to attend an orientation/training session in August. Prior to the meeting, the school counselors were asked to interview the seventh-grade social studies teachers in their respective schools to generate a pool of potential participating social studies classroom groups. Drawings were held during the meeting to determine the experimental and control groups for each school.

3. During the orientation/training session, timelines and procedures were explained to the participating school counselors and packets of the materials were distributed. The "Me in Mental Health" unit was presented and opportunities for discussion and practice were provided.

4. The middle school counselors returned to their respective schools and obtained parent and administrator approval if necessary. The seventh-grade social studies teachers were informed regarding the classes selected for participation in the study.

5. The seventh-grade social studies classes selected for the treatment groups were informed about the study.

6. Classroom group meeting dates were arranged with the teachers of the treatment groups. Classroom guidance sessions, one per week, began during the first week of September. Collection of evaluative data was completed by the middle of October.

7. During the first and second sessions, all experimental and control groups were pretested with the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1969) and the School Attitude Measure (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980). Participating students were tested in the same groups and the same area that they were assigned for treatment. Control groups were tested during their regular social studies class periods and in the areas where the classes normally meet. Assessment of the control groups occurred during the same week as the treatment group evaluation. The middle school counselors who led the experimental groups conducted the assessment and administered the instruments as designed. Posttesting occurred during the seventh and eighth sessions using the same instruments as the pretest sessions.

8. The assessment data were collected by the participating middle school counselors and returned to the researcher.

9. The participating middle school counselors provided class listings of the treatment and control groups indicating the name

of the participating school as well as gender and race of the participants.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested in this study follow. Group is experimental or control, gender is male or female, race is Caucasian or other, and school is each of the four participating schools.

Ho 1: There is no difference in general self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Ho 2: There are no interaction effects in the self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Ho 3: There is no difference in motivation for schooling of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Ho 4: There are no interaction effects in motivation for schooling of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Ho 5: There is no difference in performance-based academic self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Ho 6: There are no interaction effects in performance-based academic self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Ho 7: There is no difference in reference-based academic self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Ho 8: There are no interaction effects in reference-based academic self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Ho 9: There is no difference in sense of control over performance of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Ho 10: There are no interaction effects in sense of control over performance of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Ho 11: There is no difference in instructional mastery of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Ho 12: There are no interaction effects in instructional mastery of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Data Analyses

This research study gathered the following data for each participating student in the classroom groups: (a) general self-concept, (b) motivation for schooling, (c) performance-based academic self-concept, (d) reference-based academic self-concept, (e) sense of control over performance, and (f) instructional mastery.

Before exposure to the intervention, the experimental and control groups were pretested and adjustments were made for differences between the two groups with respect to pretest means. Pretest scores were used as covariates. Analysis of covariance was used to compare posttest means. To evaluate the hypotheses for this study, a

2 x 2 x 2 x 4 analysis of covariance was computed, and the .05 level of significance was used as the basis for rejecting a null hypothesis.

Limitations of the Study

Certain methodological limitations of this study should be noted. One of these is that selection of subjects, within the participating schools, was limited to intact classroom groups. The sampling method included the random selection of seventh-grade social studies classroom groups; thus, generalization to other grades is not advisable. The threat to external validity of mortality could be a problem as a result of individuals and/or groups dropping out during the experiment. Finally, although the four participating middle school counselors had a formal training session to conduct the treatment intervention, the differences in the presentations could be another limitation of this study.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS

Research Findings

This study investigated the effects of a structured classroom group guidance unit on the self-concepts and attitudes toward school of seventh-grade students. Seventh-grade students from four middle schools were pre- and posttested using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1969) and the School Attitude Measure (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980). The P-HSCS provided general self-concept scores and the SAM provided data on the following five subscales: Motivation for Schooling (MAS), Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept (PBASC), Reference-Based Academic Self-Concept (RBASC), Sense of Control Over Performance (SCOP), and Instructional Mastery (IM).

The experimental procedures were implemented in four middle schools by school counselors in their respective schools. Data were gathered from two randomly selected, intact classroom groups in each school, one designated the experimental group and the other the control group. Pretest data were collected for 197 seventh-grade students on the P-HSCS for 192 seventh-grade students on the SAM. Posttest data were not complete for all students because some were absent when the posttests were administered. The incomplete data were due to schedule changes, student transfers, and absences from

school. Consequently, posttest data were collected from 156 students ($E = 70$, $C = 86$) on the P-HSCS and 158 students ($E = 71$, $C = 87$) on the SAM.

The two instruments used in this study provided data to be used in testing 12 null hypotheses. These hypotheses related to the effectiveness of the "Me in Mental Health" classroom group guidance unit on self-concepts and attitudes toward school. Analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) were used to test for significant differences and interaction effects between experimental and control groups on the bases of treatment, gender, race, and school for each hypothesis. Pretests served as covariates and the 12 null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of confidence.

The research findings for each hypothesis are reported in the following six subsections. There are two hypotheses in each subsection, one relating to the differences on the bases of group, gender, race, and school and the other to interaction effects.

A significant difference between the pretest means was found in this study. Therefore, significant pretest differences for the following subsections (i.e., $H_0 1$ - $H_0 12$) must be considered tentative in evaluating the results.

General Self-Concept

$H_0 1$: There is no difference in the general self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Both experimental and control groups of seventh-grade students from all four middle schools increased their group means on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (see Table 4-1) after

Table 4-1

Summary of Adjusted Means and Standard Deviations for Experimental and Control Groups, Pre- and Posttests by School

Variable	Experimental		Control	
	N	Mean (SD)	N	Mean (SD)
<u>Howard Bishop Middle School</u>				
<u>Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale</u>				
Pretest	15	60.07 (10.37)	20	65.90 (8.14)
Posttest	15	66.80 (8.09)	20	67.20 (8.63)
<u>School Attitude Measure</u>				
Subscale A--Motivation for Schooling				
Pretest	15	49.07 (5.24)	20	52.85 (8.14)
Posttest	15	66.80 (8.09)	20	54.45 (6.20)
Subscale B--Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept				
Pretest	15	46.20 (6.89)	20	50.90 (8.18)
Posttest	15	46.80 (6.59)	20	51.30 (7.31)
Subscale C--Reference-Based Academic Self-Concept				
Pretest	15	47.67 (5.41)	20	52.75 (7.50)
Posttest	15	50.33 (7.97)	20	52.20 (7.73)
Subscale D--Sense of Control Over Performance				
Pretest	15	49.47 (6.03)	20	51.75 (8.21)
Posttest	15	51.20 (6.66)	20	51.00 (8.34)
Subscale E--Instructional Mastery				
Pretest	15	46.93 (6.01)	20	50.25 (7.79)
Posttest	15	49.93 (5.86)	20	50.40 (9.35)

Table 4-1 continued

Variable	Experimental		Control	
	N	Mean (SD)	N	Mean (SD)
<u>Fort Clarke Middle School</u>				
<u>Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale</u>				
Pretest	17	59.00 (11.96)	21	56.48 (15.93)
Posttest	17	61.18 (14.12)	21	56.57 (13.66)
<u>School Attitude Measure</u>				
Subscale A--Motivation for Schooling				
Pretest	17	53.24 (6.69)	21	50.33 (9.26)
Posttest	17	54.76 (7.06)	21	51.57 (7.95)
Subscale B--Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept				
Pretest	17	48.12 (7.41)	21	45.33 (5.83)
Posttest	17	51.12 (8.17)	21	45.24 (6.98)
Subscale C--Reference-Based Academic Self-Concept				
Pretest	17	48.06 (7.85)	21	49.00 (7.04)
Posttest	17	51.76 (6.34)	21	46.81 (7.03)
Subscale D--Sense of Control Over Performance				
Pretest	17	51.18 (8.23)	21	48.90 (6.93)
Posttest	17	53.18 (7.34)	21	50.29 (7.33)
Subscale E--Instructional Mastery				
Pretest	17	48.12 (8.14)	21	46.57 (8.56)
Posttest	17	51.88 (7.98)	21	45.43 (7.21)

Table 4-1 continued

Variable	Experimental		Control	
	N	Mean (SD)	N	Mean (SD)
<u>Lincoln Middle School</u>				
<u>Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale</u>				
Pretest	19	59.16 (11.61)	19	58.84 (12.76)
Posttest	20	62.40 (10.58)	20	59.75 (11.91)
<u>School Attitude Measure</u>				
<u>Subscale A--Motivation for Schooling</u>				
Pretest	20	50.50 (8.62)	20	46.00 (5.22)
Posttest	20	48.95 (8.42)	20	44.70 (6.58)
<u>Subscale B--Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept</u>				
Pretest	20	49.10 (6.60)	20	44.70 (5.68)
Posttest	20	48.10 (6.84)	20	43.30 (5.80)
<u>Subscale C--Reference-Based Academic Self-Concept</u>				
Pretest	20	48.30 (7.09)	20	45.95 (6.89)
Posttest	20	47.80 (6.37)	20	46.45 (6.32)
<u>Subscale D--Sense of Control Over Performance</u>				
Pretest	20	49.75 (6.71)	20	46.20 (6.18)
Posttest	20	46.45 (7.20)	20	46.45 (7.03)
<u>Subscale E--Instructional Mastery</u>				
Pretest	20	47.05 (7.78)	20	45.10 (5.87)
Posttest	20	47.00 (7.65)	20	43.60 (6.28)

Table 4-1 continued

Variable	Experimental		Control	
	N	Mean (SD)	N	Mean (SD)
<u>Westwood Middle School</u>				
<u>Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale</u>				
Pretest	19	54.37 (8.47)	26	64.04 (7.94)
Posttest	19	56.74 (12.65)	26	66.35 (9.68)
<u>School Attitude Measure</u>				
<u>Subscale A--Motivation for Schooling</u>				
Pretest	19	49.21 (7.05)	26	53.15 (8.08)
Posttest	19	48.32 (6.08)	26	54.04 (7.33)
<u>Subscale B--Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept</u>				
Pretest	19	46.00 (5.83)	26	52.85 (6.35)
Posttest	19	45.74 (5.72)	26	51.77 (9.05)
<u>Subscale C--Reference-Based Academic Self-Concept</u>				
Pretest	19	46.21 (4.09)	26	52.00 (6.99)
Posttest	19	46.26 (6.97)	26	52.38 (7.87)
<u>Subscale D--Sense of Control Over Performance</u>				
Pretest	19	46.53 (5.98)	26	51.81 (7.91)
Posttest	19	47.79 (6.20)	26	51.88 (8.07)
<u>Subscale E--Instructional Mastery</u>				
Pretest	19	44.58 (5.96)	26	51.88 (8.83)
Posttest	19	44.37 (6.82)	26	50.50 (9.26)

implementation of the unit. Thus, all groups changed in a positive direction with respect to general self-concept. The Bishop Middle School experimental group mean increased 6.73 points to 66.80 while its control group increased 1.30 points to 67.20. The Fort Clarke Middle School experimental group mean increase was a positive change of 2.18 points to 61.18 while the control group mean increased 0.09 points to 56.57. The Lincoln Middle School experimental group mean had a positive change of 3.24 points to 62.40 while the control group mean increased 0.91 points to 59.75. At Westwood Middle School, the experimental group mean increased by 2.37 points to 56.74 while the control group mean had a positive change of 2.31 points to 66.35.

An analysis of covariance was performed on data of the total sample for the P-HSCS is summarized in Table 4-2. The p value of 0.08 indicates there was no significant difference in the means between the experimental and control groups. Significant differences also were not found on the bases of gender, race, or school. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was not rejected.

The second null hypothesis was as follows:

Ho 2: There are no interaction effects in the general self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

The p values presented in Table 4-2 do not indicate significant interactions among any of the variables. Thus, this null hypothesis also was not rejected.

Motivation for Schooling

Ho 3: There is no difference in motivation for schooling of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Table 4-2

Summary of ANCOVA on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-
Concept Scale for the Total Sample

Source of Variance	DF	SS	P Value
Group	1	142.40	0.08
Race	1	2.16	0.83
Gender	1	28.54	0.43
School	3	227.10	0.17
Pretest	1	13684.41	0.01*
School x Group x Race x Gender	8	227.53	0.56
School x Group	3	235.53	0.13
School x Gender	3	169.05	0.25
Group x Race	1	39.68	0.33
Race x Gender	1	20.73	0.48
Group x Gender	1	14.30	0.56
Pretest x School x Group x Race x Gender	26	1535.15	0.10
Error	148	6608.27	

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence

As shown in Table 4-1, students in the experimental groups from Bishop and Fort Clarke Middle Schools and the control groups from Bishop, Fort Clarke, and Westwood Middle Schools had increased group means on the Motivation for Schooling Subscale of the School Attitude Measure. However, the experimental and control groups from Lincoln Middle School and the Westwood experimental group had decreased group means on this subscale.

An analysis of covariance was performed on data from the Motivation for Schooling Subscale and is summarized in Table 4-3. The p value of 0.41 indicates no significant difference between the experimental and control group means on this scale. No significant differences were found on the basis of students' race. However, there was a significant difference for gender, as indicated by the p value of 0.01. Consequently, the treatment effect depended upon the sex of the student. Girls tended to score higher than boys on the Motivation for Schooling Subscale. There also was a significant difference for school, indicated by the p value of 0.01. Consequently, the treatment effect also depended upon the school in which the student was enrolled. The results show that seventh-grade students from Fort Clarke Middle School scored higher than students from the other middle schools on the Motivation for Schooling Subscale. Thus, the third null hypothesis was rejected.

The second hypothesis in the area of motivation for schooling was as follows:

- Ho 4: There are no interaction effects in motivation for schooling of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Table 4-3

Summary of ANCOVA on the School Attitude Measure Motivation
for Schooling Subscale for the Total Sample

Source of Variance	DF	SS	P Value
Group	1	18.10	0.41
Race •	1	5.57	0.65
Gender	1	196.72	0.01*
School	3	384.93	0.01*
Pretest	1	3523.52	0.01*
Group x Race x Gender x School	8	93.32	0.91
Group x School	3	83.31	0.41
Race x School	3	34.74	0.75
Gender x School	3	19.01	0.88
Group x Race	1	2.37	0.77
Race x Gender	1	45.89	0.21
Group x Gender	1	0.14	0.94
Pretest x Group x Race x Gender x School	26	491.10	0.89
Error	150	4026.43	

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence

The p values indicated in Table 4-3 indicate no significant interactions at the .05 level among any of the variables. Therefore, this null hypothesis was not rejected.

Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept

Ho 5: There is no significant difference in performance-based academic self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

As presented in Table 4-1, students in the experimental groups from Bishop and Fort Clarke Middle Schools increased their group means on the Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept Subscale. However, while the mean for the control group from Bishop Middle School increased, the Fort Clarke Middle School control group mean decreased. Students in the experimental groups from Lincoln and Westwood Middle Schools had decreased group means and the control group means also decreased. Thus, two experimental and one control group had positive changes with respect to performance-based academic self-concept. However, two experimental groups and three control groups had a negative change in group means on this subscale.

A summary of analysis of covariance on data for the total sample for the Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept Subscale is presented in Table 4-4. The p value of 0.29 indicates no significant differences between the experimental and control group means. When tested at the .05 level, no treatment effects on the bases of race or school were found. However, the p value of 0.01 indicates a significant difference between boys and girls. Consequently, the

Table 4-4

Summary of ANCOVA on the School Attitude Measure Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept Subscale for the Total Sample

Source of Variance	DF	SS	P Value
Group	1	29.10	0.29
Race	1	0.10	0.95
Gender	1	264.36	0.01*
School	3	152.87	0.12
Pretest	1	4645.05	0.01*
Group x Race x Gender x School	8	169.60	0.56
Group x School	3	143.95	0.13
Race x School	3	162.71	0.09
Gender x School	3	134.65	0.15
Group x Race	1	16.24	0.42
Race x Gender	1	16.50	0.42
Group x Gender	1	85.67	0.07
Pretest x Group x Race x Gender x School	26	720.26	0.34
Error	150	3873.76	

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence

treatment effect depended upon the sex of the student. Girls tended to score higher than boys on the Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept Subscale. Thus, the fifth hypothesis was rejected.

The second hypothesis in the area of performance-based academic self-concept was as follows:

- Ho 6: There are no interaction effects in performance-based academic self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

The p values indicated in Table 4-4 indicate no significant interactions at the .05 level among any of the variables. Thus, this null hypothesis was not rejected.

Reference-Based Academic Self-Concept

- Ho 7: There is no difference in reference-based academic self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

Students in the experimental groups from all four of the middle schools except Lincoln increased their group means on the third subscale of the School Attitude Measure as summarized in Table 4-1. These data indicate that the group means changed positively with respect to reference-based academic self-concept. The mean for the Bishop Middle School experimental group increased by 2.66 points to 50.33. The mean for the Fort Clarke Middle School experimental group increased 3.70 points to 51.76 and the Westwood Middle School experimental group mean increased by 0.05 points to 46.26. The Lincoln Middle School experimental group mean decreased by 0.50 points to 47.80. The control group data from Bishop and Fort Clarke Middle Schools showed a decrease in group means while the Lincoln and Westwood Middle School control group means indicated an increase.

The analysis of covariance data on the total sample for the Reference-Based Academic Self-Concept Subscale is summarized in Table 4-5. The p value of 0.14 indicates no significant difference in the experimental and control group means. Significant differences also were not found on the bases of gender, sex, or school; thus, the seventh null hypothesis was not rejected.

The second hypothesis in the area of reference-based academic self-concept was as follows:

Ho 8: There are no interaction effects in reference-based academic self-concepts of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

The p value of 0.01 presented in Table 4-5 indicates that the group by gender interaction was significant. Consequently, the treatment effect depended upon the sex of the student and the group in which the student was placed. Because they were in the experimental group, girls tended to make higher scores. No significant interaction effects were found among the other variables. Therefore, this null hypothesis was rejected.

Sense of Control Over Performance

Ho 9: There is no difference in sense of control over performance of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

As shown in Table 4-1, students in the experimental groups at Bishop, Fort Clarke, and Westwood Middle Schools had increased group means while students at Lincoln Middle School had a decreased experimental group mean on the fourth subscale of the School Attitude Measure. Thus, three experimental groups had a positive change and

Table 4-5

Summary of ANCOVA on the School Attitude Measure Reference-
Based Academic Self-Concept Subscale for the Total Sample

Source of Variance	DF	SS	P Value
Group	1	57.24	0.14
Race	1	95.01	0.06
Gender	1	86.45	0.07
School	3	72.97	0.43
Pretest	1	3887.39	0.01*
Group x Race x Gender x School	8	328.13	0.06
Group x School	3	16.95	0.85
Race x School	3	21.75	0.79
Gender x School	3	108.75	0.16
Group x Race	1	2.86	0.71
Race x Gender	1	66.73	0.08
Group x Gender	1	160.97	0.01*
Pretest x Group x Race x Gender x School	26	725.32	0.15
Error	150	3893.40	

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence

one experimental group had a negative change in sense of control over performance. The experimental group mean for Bishop Middle School increased by 1.73 points to 51.20. The Fort Clarke Middle School experimental group mean increased by 2.00 points to 53.18 and the Westwood Middle School experimental group mean increased by 1.26 points to 47.79. The experimental group mean from Lincoln Middle School decreased by 3.30 points to 46.45. While the Bishop Middle School control group mean decreased, the control group means from the other three middle schools increased. Thus, three of the control groups had a positive change and one control group had a negative change with respect to the Sense of Control Over Performance Subscale.

A summary of the analysis of covariance on data for the total sample for the Sense of Control Over Performance Subscale is presented in Table 4-6. The p value of 0.96 indicates no significant difference at the .05 level between the experimental and control group means on this subscale. No significant treatment effects on the bases of race or gender were found. However, there was a significant difference for school as indicated by the p value of 0.02. Consequently, the treatment effect depended upon the school in which the student was enrolled. Seventh-grade students from Fort Clarke Middle School had higher scores than seventh-grade students from the other three middle schools on this subscale. Therefore, the ninth null hypothesis was rejected.

The second hypothesis in the area of sense of control over performance was as follows:

Table 4-6

Summary of ANCOVA on the School Attitude Measure Sense of Control Over Performance Subscale for the Total Sample

Source of Variance	DF	SS	P Value
Group	1	0.09	0.96
Race	1	1.37	0.83
Gender	1	99.44	0.06
School	1	302.96	0.01*
Pretest	1	3626.39	0.01*
Group x Race x Gender x School	8	227.41	0.47
Group x School	3	104.65	0.32
Race x School	3	52.86	0.63
Gender x School	3	53.91	0.62
Group x Race	1	4.68	0.69
Race x Gender	1	0.08	0.96
Group x Gender	1	2.27	0.78
Pretest x Group x Race x Gender x School	26	472.63	0.92
Error	150	4191.51	

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence

Ho 10: There are no interaction effects on sense of control over performance of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

The p values shown in Table 4-6 indicate no significant interaction effects at the .05 level among any of the variables. Thus, this null hypothesis was not rejected.

Instructional Mastery

Ho 11: There is no difference in instructional mastery of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

As presented in Table 4-1, students in two of the experimental groups had increased group means and the other two experimental groups had decreased group means on the Instructional Mastery Subscale of the School Attitude Measure. The Bishop Middle School experimental group mean increased by 3.00 points to 49.93 and the Fort Clarke Middle School experimental group mean increased by 3.76 points to 51.88. The Lincoln Middle School experimental group mean and the Westwood Middle School experimental group means both decreased. Three control groups had a decrease in group mean scores and one control group had an increase in group mean scores on this subscale. The Fort Clarke, Lincoln, and Westwood Middle School control group means decreased while the Bishop Middle School control group mean increased.

A summary of the analysis of covariance on data of the total sample for the Instructional Mastery Subscale is presented in Table 4-7. The p value of 0.01 indicates a significant difference between the experimental and control group means. Consequently, the treatment effect depended upon the group in which the students were placed. The

Table 4-7

Summary of ANCOVA on the School Attitude Measure Instructional
Mastery Subscale for the Total Sample

Source of Variance	DF	SS	P Value
Group	1	163.65	0.01*
Race	1	38.32	0.23
Gender	1	286.72	0.01*
School	3	235.57	0.03
Pretest	1	5102.42	0.01*
Group x Race x Gender x School	8	80.45	0.91
Group x School	3	75.13	0.39
Race x School	3	55.11	0.53
Gender x School	3	99.54	0.26
Group x Race	1	3.92	0.69
Race x Gender	1	1.42	0.81
Group x Gender	1	13.34	0.46
Pretest x Group x Race x Gender x School	26	858.55	0.15
Error	150	3919.65	

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence

treatment groups tended to score higher than the control groups on the Instructional Mastery Subscale. No significant differences were found on the bases of students' race or school. However, the p value of 0.01 indicates a significant difference on the basis of gender. Consequently, the treatment effect depended upon the sex of the student. Girls tended to score higher than boys on this subscale. Thus, the eleventh null hypothesis was rejected.

The second hypothesis in the area of instructional mastery was as follows:

Ho 12: There are no interaction effects on the instructional mastery of seventh-grade students on the bases of group, gender, race, or school.

The p values indicated in Table 4-7 indicate no significant interaction effects at the .05 level among any of the variables. Therefore, this null hypothesis was not rejected.

Summary

Although there were no significant differences in general self-concept scores, the increased group mean scores indicated a positive change for the experimental and control groups from all four of the middle schools. Furthermore, no significant interaction effects were indicated for general self-concept scores. Thus, hypotheses one and two were not rejected.

There was a significant difference in motivation for schooling on the bases of gender and school. The test results indicated that girls tended to score higher than boys and students from Fort Clarke Middle School scored higher than seventh-grade students from the other three

middle schools on the Motivation for Schooling Subscale. Thus, the third hypothesis was rejected. Because there were no significant interaction effects in motivation for schooling, hypothesis four was not rejected.

With regard to performance-based academic self-concepts of seventh-grade students, there was a significant difference on the basis of gender. Females scored higher than males on this subscale. Thus, hypothesis five was rejected. Because there were no significant interaction effects in performance-based academic self-concepts, hypothesis six was not rejected.

The analyses further indicated no significant differences in reference-based academic self-concepts on the bases of group, gender, race, or school. Thus, the seventh hypothesis was not rejected. However, there was a significant interaction effect between gender and group. This indicates that the treatment effect depended upon the sex of the student and the group in which the student was placed. Consequently, the null hypothesis related to interaction effects in reference-based academic self-concepts was rejected.

With regard to sense of control over performance, there was a significant difference on the basis of school. This suggests that the treatment effect depended upon the school in which the student was enrolled. Seventh-grade students from Fort Clarke Middle School scored higher than seventh-grade students from the other three middle schools on this subscale. Consequently, hypothesis nine was rejected. However, because there were no significant interaction effects in sense of control over performance, the tenth hypothesis was not rejected.

The analyses further revealed significant differences on the bases of group and gender with regard to the instructional mastery of seventh-grade students. When they were in the treatment groups, girls tended to score higher than males on the Instructional Mastery Subscale. Thus, the eleventh hypothesis was rejected. However, because there were no significant interaction effects, the twelfth null hypothesis was not rejected.

Pretests were used as covariates in this study. Test results indicated significant differences in the pretest scores for each of the measures. Thus, these results must be considered tentative.

CHAPTER V DISCUSSION

Generalizability Limitations

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of the "Me in Mental Health" structured classroom group guidance unit on the self-concepts and attitudes toward school of seventh-grade students. More specifically, investigated was whether the "Me in Mental Health" unit had an effect on general self-concepts, motivation for schooling, performance-based academic self-concept, reference-based academic self-concept, sense of control over performance, and instructional mastery of the participating seventh-grade students. The differential effectiveness of this unit for boys and girls, students of different racial backgrounds, and for students from different middle schools also was explored.

This study had the following limitations to its generalizability. First, the generalizability of this study is limited to the seventh-grade student population and to students in large middle schools. Second, although all four of the presenters participated in the same orientation/training program and received the same information, there may have been some differences in the presentations among the four schools. These differences may have been due to the individual personalities and/or presentations of the participating school counselors and/or differences in the specific school settings. Third,

conducting the study early in the school term resulted in having incomplete posttest data because of schedule changes, student transfers, and absences from school. Lastly, as a result of the significant differences in the pretest scores, these results must be considered tentative.

Discussion

For this study, two intact, seventh-grade social studies classes were identified in four middle schools. One class from each school was selected as an experimental group and another class as a control group. Students in the experimental groups participated in an eight-session classroom group guidance unit. The control groups continued in their regular social studies program and did not participate in the classroom guidance unit until after the research study was completed.

This study was conducted during the first two months of the school term. The school counselors presenting the classroom guidance unit participated in an orientation/training session prior to implementation of the research procedures. Pretesting occurred during the first two classroom sessions, with both the experimental and control groups being administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale and the School Attitude Measure during the same weeks. The experimental groups participated in six additional, 45-minute classroom sessions, once per week for six weeks. The classroom guidance sessions and test administrations were conducted by school counselors in their respective schools. During the seventh and eighth sessions, the experimental and control groups were posttested with the same instruments during the same weeks.

Each of the school counselors who participated in the research study attended the orientation/training session held prior to implementation of the research procedures. The researcher, with assistance from the Executive Director of the Alachua County Mental Health Association, conducted the orientation/training session. Although each of the four participating school counselors received identical information (see Appendix B) and training, there may have been some differences in the actual presentations in individual schools. For example, some of the school counselors may have deviated from the guidelines by omitting certain activities or by devoting too much time to some parts of the unit and not enough to others. Furthermore, the personalities of the individual school counselors, as well as characteristics of specific school settings, may have contributed to some differences in the implementation of the study.

Completed posttest data were collected from 156 seventh-grade students (E = 70, C = 86) on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale and 158 seventh-grade students (E = 71, C = 87) on the School Attitude Measure. With the research study being implemented during the early part of the school term, several students who were pretested had incomplete posttest data because of schedule changes, student transfers, or absences from school.

Although there were no significant differences, as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, the group mean scores suggest that there was a gain in the general self-concept scores of participating students. The P-HSCS Manual (Piers & Harris, 1969) points out that "studies which attempt to measure change after a

relatively brief intervention may not find any significant differences" (p. 5).

The other instrument used in this study was the School Attitude Measure (Scott, Foresman, & Company Test Division, 1980). This self-report survey instrument provided data on the following five subscales: Motivation for Schooling, Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept, Reference-Based Academic Self-Concept, Sense of Control Over Performance, and Instructional Mastery.

Items in the Motivation for Schooling Subscale were designed to assess the degree to which students are willing to participate in current school experiences because they are meaningful, their desire to perform competently in future school experiences, their perceptions of the relationship of current schooling to future needs, their willingness to pursue future schooling, their perceptions of the importance of school relative to other activities, and their perceptions of the way individuals significant to the student view the student's school experience. The results of the data analyses indicated that two experimental groups had a positive change in group means on this subscale. Furthermore, there was a significant difference with gender and school as independent variables. This suggests that girls and seventh-grade students from Fort Clarke Middle School scored higher in motivation for schooling than males and seventh-grade students from the other three middle schools.

The Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept Subscale items assessed the degree to which students perceive their ability to do a majority of school tasks competently, feel important as a member of their class, react to poor performance, expect success, are involved

in school tasks, and are confident in their own feelings. The results indicated that two of the experimental groups increased their group mean scores on the Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept Subscale. It was also found that there was a significant difference in performance-based academic self-concept on the basis of gender. Consequently, the females in this study scored higher than the males on this subscale.

The items in the Reference-Based Academic Self-Concept Subscale were designed to assess students' perceptions of the discrepancy between their performance in school and the expectations of others, their willingness to discuss school performance, and their ability to compare their current performance with appropriate reference groups. The analyses indicated that three of the experimental groups increased their group mean scores on the Reference-Based Academic Self-Concept Subscale. There were no significant differences on the bases of group, gender, race, or school, but there was a significant interaction effect on the basis of the group by gender interaction. Thus, the treatment effect depended upon a combination of the sex of the student and the group in which the student was placed. Girls in the experimental group tended to score higher than boys.

Items in the Sense of Control Over Performance Subscale were designed to assess students' perceptions of ability as opposed to luck or fate, their willingness to take responsibility for school outcomes, their awareness of the relationship between actions and outcomes of schooling, and their self-reliance and independence in the school setting. The analyses showed that three of the experimental groups had increased group mean scores on this subscale. There also was a

significant difference on the basis of school. Thus, seventh-grade students from Fort Clarke Middle School scored higher on this subscale than seventh-graders from the other three middle schools. This may be because the majority of students from Fort Clarke Middle School come from well-educated, high socio-economic backgrounds.

The Instructional Mastery Subscale items were designed to assess students' ability to use time effectively and efficiently, their persistence in instructional tasks, their ability to focus attention or concentrate on instructional tasks, their ability to seek and use feedback, and their ability to evaluate their own work. As shown in the test results, two of the experimental groups had a positive change in their group means on this subscale. The analyses further indicated a significant difference on the bases of group and gender. Thus, female students in the experimental groups had higher scores on this subscale than males in the control group population. This may suggest that the "Me in Mental Health" unit was effective with the participating students. Furthermore, it may indicate that girls are more able to report the actual state of their school skills as described by the items related to this subscale.

Conclusions

A number of conclusions may be drawn from the results of this study. Although there were no significant differences, there was a positive change in the group mean scores of the participating seventh-grade students as indicated by the P-HSCS general self-concept scores. Furthermore, one-half or more of the seventh-grade experimental group population in this study had a positive change in

group mean scores with regard to each of the five subscales of the School Attitude Measure. However, the probability, based on the statistics, was that these effects were due to "chance."

There was a significant difference at the .05 level in the Motivation for Schooling, Performance-Based Academic Self-Concept, and Instructional Mastery Subscales on the basis of gender. Thus, girls tended to score higher than boys with regard to these subscales. These results may suggest that girls are capable to a larger degree than boys to observe and report their attitudes and school behaviors. Furthermore, because females usually mature earlier than males, this may be the result of the impact of the maturation process.

The experimental group from Fort Clarke Middle School scored higher on the Motivation for Schooling and Sense of Control Over Performance Subscales than the experimental groups from the other three middle schools. This suggests that seventh-grade students who come from well-educated high socio-economic backgrounds scored higher than students from less educated and lower socio-economic backgrounds.

There also was a significant difference on the Instructional Mastery Subscale of the School Attitude Measure on the basis of group. This suggests that the specific activities included in the "Me in Mental Health" unit enabled the students in the experimental groups to more ably report the state of their actual school skills.

In conclusion, one reason for not obtaining more positive results in this study may have been the length of the treatment. Another reason may have been the utilization of intact classroom groups rather than randomized small groups. More significant effects also may have

been identified by using different assessment instruments for assessing the self-concepts. Furthermore, the differences in the pretest scores suggest that the results may have been more significant if groups with equivalent pretest scores had been used. Lastly, the differences in the presenters and presentations of the unit as well as the variance in the types of students also may have been contributing factors to the lack of significant effects of the treatment.

Recommendations

The present study's findings suggest a number of research needs. First, this study should be replicated using groups with equivalent pretests. Second, studies similar to the present one should be conducted in which different age groups are sampled and/or other dynamics the unit might effect explored. Third, further studies should include a larger number of students as well as students from smaller schools and comparisons made among the groups. Fourth, additional studies should be conducted by presenting the "Me in Mental Health" unit to small groups (8-12 students) and comparisons made to the classroom group study. Fifth, any further research studies conducted should be implemented later in the school term because of the large number of absences and schedule changes that occur at the beginning of the school year.

In addition, school counselor training programs and inservice training sessions should be designed to help school counselors develop and implement additional classroom group guidance units and research projects. Few classroom guidance units designed specifically for the middle school level are available, and little research is being

conducted on middle school guidance activities. Thus, with the various training programs teaching school counselors how to develop and present classroom guidance units and research projects, these weaknesses can be alleviated.

Implications

Structured classroom group guidance units can be important resources to school counselors and teachers and they can have a positive effect on seventh-grade students' self-concepts and attitudes toward school. Although there were no significant differences in the general self-concept experimental group mean scores, the data from this study showed an increased in seventh-grade students' general self-concept group mean scores. Thus, the eight-week "Me in Mental Health" intervention helped improve seventh-grade students' self-concepts to a limited degree which, in turn, should help these students feel better about themselves and improve their school performance. However, a replicated study using a longer intervention might result in the identification of significant differences in the general self-concepts of seventh-grade students.

Furthermore, the activities included in the "Me in Mental Health" unit should be more closely examined in relation to what is measured by the School Attitude Measure. A different instrument may more adequately measure what is actually taught in the unit. It also may indicate that additional and/or modified activities may need to be included in the unit if the same instrument is used.

The results of this study revealed that there were significant differences by using pretests as covariates. Thus, it is suggested

that this study be replicated using groups with equivalent pretests. Furthermore, there may be other things on which the "Me in Mental Health" unit might have an effect. Consequently, these areas should be identified and explored in additional studies.

This study provided limited evidence that a structured classroom guidance unit can be beneficial to seventh-grade students. Thus, by providing additional classroom guidance units such as the "Me in Mental Health" unit, middle school guidance programs may be enhanced and more students may benefit from the expanded programs.

Through verbal feedback, the "Me in Mental Health" unit appeared to be well-received by the students, teachers, school counselors, and principals who participated in this study. The middle school counselors reported that the Leaders' Guide (see Appendix A) was easy to follow and that students eagerly participated in the activities. In addition, the research procedures were reported as being clear, specific, and well-organized. The participating students also indicated positive feelings regarding the program on the unit evaluation form. Thus, similar research studies focusing on various aspects of the middle school guidance program might be well-received by these groups.

In carrying out the implementation procedures for this research study, however, it was discovered that the middle school counselors needed further training in the presentation of classroom guidance units and in conducting research studies. Thus, this suggests that inservice training programs and school counselor training programs need to more adequately address these areas.

In summary, this study provided some evidence that structured classroom guidance units can be valuable at the middle school level. Thus, this activity might be expanded to include students of other grade levels as well as students in other middle schools. It is further suggested that additional classroom guidance units, focusing on self-concepts and other areas, might be included in middle school guidance programs. Finally, it is also recommended that similar research studies be implemented to evaluate these activities.

APPENDIX A
LEADER'S GUIDE, HANDOUTS, AND WORKSHEETS

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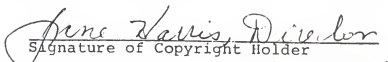
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THE ME IN MENTAL HEALTH

JUNIOR HIGH SELF ESTEEM PROGRAM LEADERS GUIDE

Revised, 1986

by

Alachua County Middle School Counselors

This project is co-sponsored by:

The Mental Health Association of
Alachua County

and the

Alachua County Community
Education

PURPOSE

This program was compiled because we at the Mental Health Association of Minnesota feel very strongly that a healthy self-concept is vital to maintaining good mental health. We often say that we are mentally healthy if we feel good about others, and are able to meet the demands of life. There is no one right way to be mentally healthy at any age, but there are certain things we can do to help us improve our mental health and maintain it.

We want to help students do this by thinking about who they are, about who they want to become, and about how to accept the person they are at any given time. All of us need to be told and shown that we are important and valued people. Our purpose is to tell as many teenagers as possible just that and to help them begin to develop a positive self-image that will last into their future. This program is a follow-up to our elementary self-esteem program, called "There's Nobody Else Like You."

Our first step in the program is to define our topic: Self-image is the picture we each have of ourselves which sets the boundaries of our accomplishments. It is how we feel about ourselves and how much we like ourselves. It affects every aspect of behavior--our ability to learn, our capacity to grow and change, our choice of friends and careers. It is certainly no exaggeration to say that a strong, positive self-image is the best possible preparation we can give young people for success in life. Since adolescents enter early adulthood with a self-concept that will remain quite stable for the rest of their lives, it is important that we act now to provide each one with genuine dignity and respect. As Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner, authority on child development at Cornell University, states: "The junior high years are probably the most critical to the development of a child's mental health. It is during this period of self-doubt that the personality is often assaulted and damaged beyond repair."

Studies show that one out of five young people is indeed seriously affected by low self-esteem. When these feelings of self-criticism and lack of self-confidence continue long enough, they leave their mark on a person's physical well-being and effective functioning. A sense of worth, however, makes an adolescent feel more secure. This security makes it easier to use personal conviction rather than a need for group approval as a base for making decisions.

Teenagers are showing us by their behavior that they need help in learning to handle the pressures in their lives. We hope this program will be one step in providing that help.

SYNOPSIS

Two filmstrips, "Personality and Mental Health--How to Like Yourself" introduce and close the five session unit. These filmstrips identify stress as an integral part of living and explain that the road to

mental health lies in coping with stress, not avoiding it. They also provide guidelines for helping students distinguish between problems they can handle on their own and problems for which they should seek help. The leader's guide will lead the teacher through the series of activities designed to highlight:

FEELINGS
WHO AM I?
PEER PRESSURE
ATTITUDES ABOUT OTHERS

Pamphlets are included for teachers, parents and students.

OBJECTIVES

1. To encourage students to make an honest appraisal of who they are and what they have the potential to become, and to accept and like themselves.
2. To assist young people in developing an identity that is strong enough to withstand the pressures they are now facing and will face as they mature.
3. To challenge students to explore their relationships with people around them: peers, parents, teachers.
4. To help students realize that they are not alone in their feelings, problems, and concerns.
5. To show students that help and support are there if and when they need it.

AGE GROUP

Grades 7 & 8

PRESENTATION NOTES

This unit is designed to be presented in eight one-hour sessions. The sessions may be presented one hour a week for eight weeks or one hour a day for eight days. The program may be presented by teachers, volunteers, nurses, etc. It may be presented in a health class, English class, home economics class or any other class where the teacher is interested and willing to spend the time. This program is designed to be presented to a classroom size group. Worksheets are included and easily reproducible.

Presenters please note: There are more questions included in each activity than you will probably need. Use those that seem most relevant to your group and do not feel obligated to cover all of

them. The time frame included is a guide only and need not be adhered to strictly. If a discussion is going well or one activity takes longer, carry activities over to the next session. Please take time before you begin the sessions to go through the entire program and become familiar with it.

Please emphasize and carry through with the concept that students will be asked to share, but will not be forced to discuss something if they feel uncomfortable. They must have the option to pass.

INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS FOR TEACHERS ON SELF-ESTEEM

"True, all children need to experience their competence to build self-respect. But each child needs to feel that his person is cherished regardless of his competence. Successful performance builds the sense of worthwhileness; being cherished as a person nurtures the feeling of being loved. Every child needs to feel both loved and worthwhile. But lovability must not be tied to worthwhile performance. The more lovable any child feels, however, the more likely he is to perform in satisfactory ways, for then he likes himself."

Dorothy Corkille Briggs, author of Your Child's Self-Esteem

"Perhaps the most important single cause of a person's success or failure educationally has to do with the question of what he believes about himself."

Arthur W. Coombs, author of Perceiving, Behaving and Becoming

". . . even the most insensitive parent or teacher can usually recognize and take into account a crippling physical handicap. Negative self-esteem, however, is often overlooked because we fail to take the time and effort it requires to be sensitive to how children see themselves and their abilities."

William W. Purkey, author of Self-Concept and School Achievement

"The teacher as a person is more important than the teacher as technician. What he is has more effect than anything he does."

Jack Canfield, author of 100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom

"We all make mistakes. But to commit a wrong, to lower the dignity of a child and not be aware that the dignity has been impaired, is much more serious than the child's skipping words during reading."

Clark Moustakes, author of The Self: Explorations in Personal Growth

"The student takes his self-concept with him wherever he goes. . . . Are we influencing that self-concept in positive or negative ways? We need to ask ourselves these kinds of questions: How can a person feel liked unless somebody likes him? How can a person feel wanted unless somebody wants him? How can a person feel accepted unless somebody

accepts him? How can a person feel he's a person with dignity and integrity unless somebody treats him so? And how can a person feel that he is capable unless he has some success?

Arthur W. Coombs, author of The Human Side of Learning

"You cannot teach a man anything. You can only help him discover it within himself."

Galileo

". . . over time, a continuing and steadfast focus on the positives in life, on our strengths, and on the strengths of others can help to restore in our students their personal energy, their feelings of power, their sense of worth so that they can see themselves as positive forces who can contribute to the task of building a better world."

Robert C. Hawley, author of Human Values in the Classroom

"Everything has its beauty, but not everyone sees it."

Confucius

PROGRAM GUIDE

Day 1

Administration of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale and introduction to the study.

Day 2

Administration of the School Attitude Measure
(Treatment and Control Groups are pretested the same week.)

Day 3

Introduction: We are going to spend some time thinking and talking about ourselves and our mental health using materials given to us by the Mental Health Association of Minnesota. The Mental Health Association tells us that we are considered mentally healthy if we feel good about ourselves, feel good about others, and are able to meet the demands of life. We are going to explore how we feel about ourselves and others, and we are going to talk about some of the demands that are placed on us right now. We hope that we will all feel better about ourselves when we are finished.

To being, let's watch the filmstrip, "Personality and Mental Health--How to Like Yourself," part 1. (showing time--14 minutes)

Show Filmstrip

Student Handout--"You Are Special"

(Hand out the pamphlet provided to each of the students. Read it aloud and briefly discuss some of the points brought out, their feelings or questions about it.)

Follow up discussion questions:

1. Do you think it is important to have a good opinion of yourself? Why or why not?
2. Define self-esteem.
3. What is the difference between having self-confidence and being self-centered?
4. When do you feel good about yourself (like yourself)?
What helps you feel good?
How do you act when you feel good about yourself? (for example: Do you take better care of yourself? Act more confident?)
5. When don't you feel good about yourself?
What makes you feel bad?
How do you act when you do not feel good about yourself? (for example: Are you argumentative, short tempered, disruptive, etc.?)

Thought for the Day

(Please read aloud to the class to wrap up each session)

ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE SPECIAL, BUT DON'T FORGET THAT THE KID SITTING NEXT TO YOU IS SPECIAL TOO, BECAUSE TO HIM, HE'S A YOU!

Day 4

Activity #1--Feelings

Teacher: Talk to the students about the fact that we all have a lot of different feelings and that today we are going to take a few minutes to think about some of them. Ask them to vote by raising their hand if they have experienced the feeling you are reading. Discussions may spring from this activity along the way. Feel free to add in or delete other feelings that may be applicable for your group. This is a good ice-breaker; keep it fun and friendly and open.

HOW MANY OF YOU:

Ever get scared?

Like to get angry?

Are afraid when your parents get angry?

Are afraid when your parents fight?

Are afraid of ghosts?

Day 4 Continued

Feel good when your parents show they love you?
Sometimes want to destroy everything in sight?
Get so mad you could hit someone?
Think you get bossed around too much at home; in school; by your friends; by grown-ups in general?
Like one parent more than the other?
Feel loved?
Know what you want to be when you grow up?
Like to be teased? Sometimes tease others?
Are afraid of the dark?
Are proud of your family?
Are disappointed when you don't do well at something?
Think school is fun? Think school is hard?
Feel proud when you do well at something?
Feel that life could be better for you?
Would like to change your name?
Feel happy most of the time?
Feel you have a communication problem with your parents?
Would like to change something about the way you look?
Have secrets that you keep?
Think people might not like you if they knew who you really were?
Think people would like you if they knew who you really were?
Do not like to talk in class?
Find it easy to make new friends?
Find it hard to make new friends?
Have ever wanted to hurt someone for something they did to you?
Would like to live somewhere else?
Would rather be older or younger than you are right now?
Daydream sometimes?
Have ever been scared to try something new?
Feel that you have to work too hard?
Thought that you were the only one who had some of these feelings?

(This activity was adapted from the book 100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom)

Activity #2--More on Feelings

We have talked about feelings in general. Let's spend some time talking about a few very common feelings. (Divide the class into five small groups. Have each group discuss one feeling and jot down notes to share briefly with the entire class. Give the small groups about 10-15 minutes to discuss and then share with the rest.)

Group 1--Inferiority

1. What do we mean by "feeling inferior?"
2. Do you sometimes have feelings of inferiority? Discuss the reasons people have for feeling inferior--looks, failing a class, rejections, criticism. Can you list other reasons? Are these real reasons for feeling inferior?

Day 4 Continued

3. What do you do when you feel inferior? How do you act?

Group 2--Worry & Fear

1. Do you sometimes feel afraid and worried? What kinds of things make you feel fear or anxiety? (list some)
2. Do you have some good ways to handle your fears and worries? What are they?

Group 3--Anger

1. What makes you angry? When you have been angry have you ever stopped to wonder if you were angry at the correct thing or person? (for example: the fault could lie with ourself or something we can't control, etc.)
2. Do you believe the statement: "No one else can make you angry. You make yourself angry."
3. What are some good ways to use your anger?

Group 4--Pride

1. Do you feel proud of yourself when you have done well? Do you think it is o.k. to feel pride in your accomplishments or are you afraid of being thought conceited?
2. How do you react when people compliment you? Why do you think you react the way you do? Do you often think people don't mean what they say or that you don't deserve the compliment?

Group 5--Love

1. Do you believe that everyone needs the love and support of other people or can we survive very well on our own?
2. How can you tell if someone loves you? Is it enough if they say they do . . . or is it necessary for them to show you by their actions as well? How do people show that they love someone else?

Complete Worksheet #1 if Time Permits. Discuss Answers Briefly.

Ask the students if they sometimes think that they are the only one who has a particular feeling or think they shouldn't feel a certain way. Remind them that it is o.k. to have all of our different feelings. However, they should also know that, sometimes when our feelings are not good, we may react by saying or doing things we probably shouldn't. The behavior that goes with the feelings is not always acceptable. We may need to learn more constructive ways of dealing with our bad feelings. Talking it out with someone could help.

Day 4 Continued

Thought for Today:

REMEMBER THAT EVERYONE FAILS, EVERYONE GOOFS UP, EVERYONE FEELS MISERABLE OR SAD AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER. WE NEED TO ACCEPT OUR BAD TIMES, LEARN TO WORK THEM OUT, AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR FEELINGS.

Day 5

How Do You See Yourself? Activity #3

An essential part of each of us is how we see ourselves in relation to others. These views may be accurate (real) or inaccurate. These views influence how we behave. If our pictures of ourselves are strong and positive, they protect us in time of trouble and give us confidence to try new things. If they are negative, we are much more vulnerable and less likely to try new things. There are a number of ways to understand ourselves better. Some of them are: thinking about ourselves, talking to others, observing the way people react to us and filling out worksheets which help us to think about ourselves. It is important that we do have an accurate picture of ourselves.

Discussion questions:

1. Have you ever sat down and thought about yourself and tried to understand what makes you the way you are?
2. What do we mean when we say, "know yourself?"
3. Is it always easy to "be ourselves" when we feel different from those around us?
4. Do you think most people look at themselves realistically? Why or why not?
5. Why is it important to develop a realistic self-concept?
6. Do you enjoy being you? Explain.

Complete Worksheet #2

Follow up: Have students look over their sheets and circle all of the ODD items they answered FALSE. Then have them circle all of the EVEN items they answered TRUE. Tell them that the circled items are potential areas for improvement. Let them share some of these with the class as they desire. Tell them we will be talking more about setting goals and discussing areas they might want to improve in some of the other sessions.

Day 5 Continued

Strengths and Limitations--Activity #4

Talk about these statements:

1. Part of feeling good about ourselves is the ability to know what we can and cannot do about certain problems.
2. Do you have realistic expectations for yourself or are you trying to be perfect all of the time? (Do you often say: "I shouldn't get angry"; "I should have thought of that"; "I should be able to learn anything"; "I should like everyone"; "Everyone should like me"; "I should never complain"; etc.)

Have the students complete these four sentences: (Give them time to think about it, help out with suggestions, encourage them to be honest--these are for their eyes only and need be shared only if they want to do so.)

My greatest strengths are.....(Consider health, good habits, natural abilities, honesty, sincerity, skills, physical features, etc.)

My negatives (weaknesses) are.....(Consider bad habits, bad temper, moodiness, poor ways of solving problems, etc.)

Things about myself I can and want to improve are.....(Consider how you may become a better student, more cooperative, more helpful, more hopeful, more patient, more understanding, less selfish, etc.)

Things I am going to have to learn to live with are.....(Where you live, how you look, something you don't do well, etc. Can you learn to accept those things that you can't change and still be happy or will you always blame them for making you unhappy?)

Students are asked to share if they feel comfortable doing so.

(This activity was adapted from "Life Skills for Mental Health"--Georgia Department of Education)

Day 5 Continued

Thought for Today

NOW THAT YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED SOME THINGS ABOUT YOURSELF THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE, ASK YOURSELF IF THE CHANGES ARE REALISTIC AND ATTAINABLE. ARE YOU WILLING TO WORK TO BRING ABOUT THESE CHANGES? SOME MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED IN A WEEK OR SO, BUT SOME MAY TAKE A YEAR OR LONGER TO COMPLETE.

Day 6

Peer Groups--Activity #5

Teacher: A peer group is crucial to adolescents since it provides a place for self-discovery as well as social development. However, adolescents are extremely sensitive to the norms of the group and tend to evaluate their own worth in light of their acceptance and approval by the group. Our purpose is to try to help teens learn to balance the need for being themselves with being accepted by the group. It is often hard to be an individual during this time of turmoil. These questions may help teens analyze where they stand with their friends.

Divide the class into 5 groups. Give each group a set of questions to discuss and ask them to jot down notes so they can report back to the entire group. Give them 10-15 minutes to complete small group discussions.

All Groups

1. Define peers-peer groups.

Group 1

1. Have you ever done something you didn't want to do just to please someone else? Give an example or make one up for discussion purposes. How did this make you feel?
2. How much influence do your friends have over you? (Discuss the bad influence they may have.)

Group 2

1. Do you give yourself the right to act and think differently from your friends and still feel good about yourself?
2. Do you give others the right to think and act differently from you? Do you feel judgmental? Can you accept their right to be different?

Day 6 Continued

Group 3

1. What benefits are there to having friends?
2. How can they help you and you them?

Group 4

1. Have you ever taken a stand on an issue that went against the opinion of most of your friends? How did you feel about yourself? About your friends?
2. If you try to be popular with everyone, you may end up letting others run your life. (Discuss)

Group 5

1. Do some people "go along with the crowd" even then they don't want to do so? Are they trying to turn themselves into the person they think they should be?
2. Do you have the courage to be imperfect?

Complete Worksheet #3

Discuss when completed. Ask students to express their views on the importance of the items listed.

Introduction questions:

1. Think back to a negative statement that you made recently about someone. What was that person's reaction?
2. Think back to a statement that you made recently that was positive. What was the result?
3. Is it easier to criticize others or to criticize ourselves?

Teachers: Emphasize the fact that we all like to receive positive feelings and that we all do have positive and good things about us. Tell students that we are going to spend some time today thinking about positive in ourselves and others.

Positive Feedback Activity

In small groups, have students write a positive statement about each student in their group on labels and stick them on each student's card.

Day 6 Continued

Thought for Today:

AN IMPORTANT PART OF BUILDING SELF-CONFIDENCE IS DEVELOPING FAITH IN YOURSELF, SO THAT YOU CAN MAKE DECISIONS BASED UPON WHAT YOU THINK IS RIGHT, NOT UPON WHAT YOU THINK OTHER PEOPLE WANT YOU TO DO.

IN ORDER TO DEVELOP SELF-CONFIDENCE, YOU MUST LEARN TO MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM.

Day 7

Follow up:

Why is it sometimes hard to think of positive things instead of negative?

How might a parent, teacher, or classmate help someone develop a more positive self-image? What might you do?

Show Filmstrip--Part 2 (13 minutes)

Administer Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale

Discuss any questions the students may have on any areas.

Day 8

Administer the School Attitude Measure

Complete Worksheet #4--Evaluations

Counselors: Please fill out an evaluation and ask all students to do so as well. They need not sign their names. Additional comments may be added to the bottom. Look them over and then please mail all evaluations to us. This will help us to monitor the program and to make necessary improvements. Return forms to:

Dot Thomas
Spring Hill Middle School

(THANK YOU)

Hand Out "Hooray for Me" Pamphlet to the Students

Send the parent pamphlets home with the students or mail them home if you feel that is the only way they will get there.

Thought for Today:

IF IT FEELS SO GOOD WHEN SOMEONE SAYS SOMETHING NICE TO US--WHY DON'T WE SAY SOMETHING NICE TO OTHERS MORE OFTEN?

Thank students for participating.

Optional

Class Project--Activity #8

Have several or all students investigate mental health services in your community (local mental health centers, family and children's services, self-help groups, hot lines, counselors, church groups, etc.) Ask them to find out what is available, what costs there are, etc. and make a report to the class. Emphasize to the students that there is help available to them if they should ever need it.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Here is a list of activities which can be used to enhance self-esteem in the classroom. Use them to supplement during the program if you have extra time, or as follow-up activities or a change of pace.

1. Feature students one at a time, either by having a "student of the week" and letting students design their own bulletin boards in the classroom or by asking students to design posters of themselves. Students might prepare a collage of drawn or cut out words, pictures, or symbols representing themselves. (Things they like to do, things they would enjoy, people they admire). You can ask that they not be signed and have other students guess whose poster is whose when they are shared with the class.
2. Encourage students to write a short poem or story entitled, "It's Great to Be Me!" or "Me!"
3. Encourage students to make posters using quotes which emphasize the concepts discussed in the program. (Some suggested quotes are included in this packet.) A teacher may also post a different quote each day to remind students of some of the ideas discussed.
4. Coat of Arms--Hand out dittoed sheets with a blank coat of arms design or ask students to draw their own, dividing it into seven sections. Students create individual coat of arms by drawing an expression of their thoughts on each of the following questions:
 1. Sketch your happiest or funniest memory.
 2. Sketch your saddest or most embarrassing or most negative memory.
 3. Sketch your greatest fear.
 4. Express in a drawing your greatest success or achievement in the past year.
 5. Express what you would do if you could do whatever you wanted in the world.
 6. Express in a drawing something you know more about than anyone in the room.
 7. If you died today, what three things would you most like to be said of you?

When they are finished, ask the students to form groups of 5 or 6 and share with the group. They may skip any areas they don't wish to discuss.

Students may also select, or have the teacher help them select, one of the areas to develop into a story, essay, poem or article.

This assignment is designed to help the students locate their own uniqueness. It is also designed to start them thinking about what direction they may want to take with their lives.

(This activity is adapted from the book 100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom)

QUOTES FOR POSTERS

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

A friend is someone who knows all about you, but . . . likes you anyway.

I may not be totally perfect, but parts of me are excellent.

You're special.

We all make mistakes.

Nothing improves my hearing better than praise.

Be good to yourself now and then.

The smallest good deed is better than the grandest good intention.

Don't fuss! Just treat me like any other great person.

I have tried so hard to become what I ought to be that I forgot what I am.

It's nice to be liked just the way you are.

I am lovable and capable.

The way you go must be your decision.

Success comes in cans, not in can'ts.

If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else.

No matter how dark the beginning, one who strives can reach the sun.

Following the crowd can lead nowhere.

The way to get anywhere is to start from where you are.

If you don't try, you'll never know if you can do it.

Where you come from is not nearly as important as where you are going.

Accept me as I am so I can learn what I can become.

My friend is not perfect, nor am I--we suite each other admirably.

No one else can make you angry. You make yourself angry!

Bit people make mistakes and admit them. Only little people are never wrong!

There is no time in your life when you have to say, "I'm this way and I have to stay this way for the rest of my life.

Accept yourself as a valuable person and you will be amazed at how many others accept you also.

The word IMPOSSIBLE is peculiar, because if you examine it closely you'll find most of it is POSSIBLE.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional information about teenagers and self-esteem, I suggest the following:

100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom by Jack Canfield and Harold Wells, Prentice-Hall, 1976

Your Child's Self-Esteem by Dorothy Briggs, Doubleday, 1975

Adolescence Is Not an Illness by Bruce Narramore, 1980

How to Live With Your Teenager--A Survivor's Handbook for Parents by Peter Buntman, Birch Tree Press, 1979

Self-Esteem: A Family Affair by Jean Illsley Clarke, Winston Press, 1978

Values Clarification by Sidney Simon and others, Hart, 1972

Survival Kit for Parents of Teenagers by David Melton, St. Martins Press, 1979

"On the Level," a film series with worksheets available from the State Department of Education

"Learning to Cope and Grow, Set I--Facing Your Feelings," a filmstrip series available from Guidance Associates

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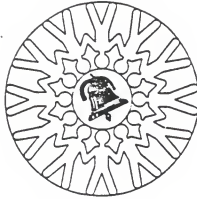
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The Mental Health Association of Minnesota is a division of the National Mental Health Association, a nationwide, voluntary, nonprofit, nongovernmental organization dedicated to the prevention of mental illness, the promotion of mental health, and the improved care and treatment of the mentally ill. We work toward these goals in partnership with county chapters throughout the state and thousands of concerned volunteers.

WE THANK THE MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION of MINNESOTA
FOR SHARING THIS PROGRAM WITH US:

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION of ALACHUA COUNTY
412 N.E. 16th Ave., Room 145
Gainesville, Florida 32601
(904) 372-9809

WORKSHEET # 1

FEELINGS

INFERIORITY

T or F

1. Most people probably feel inferior about certain things at one time or another. _____
2. Sometimes when people feel inferior, they make up for it by putting other people down. _____
3. If your father is a lawyer, you are superior to your friend whose father is a mechanic. _____
4. If you don't do well in mathematics, science, or some other subject, you are an inferior person. _____
5. If someone is better looking than you are, you should feel inferior. _____
6. Sometimes we don't do as well as we are capable of because we feel inferior. _____
7. Feeling proud and having confidence in yourself can help you overcome feelings of inferiority. _____

FEAR AND WORRY

1. We all have feelings of fear and worry at one time or another. _____
2. Having some anxiety before taking a test or before competing in some other activity is normal and often helpful. _____
3. If you feel you can't handle your fears and worries, you should try to get some help. _____

PRIDE

1. Someone who feels proud of him/herself is a conceited person. _____
2. When someone gives me a compliment, I feel embarrassed. _____

CARING - LOVE

1. Knowing that someone loves you helps you feel good about yourself. _____
2. Respecting someone's feelings and wishes shows them that you love and care for them. _____

WORKSHEET # 2

HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

Answer the following items true or false.

1. ____ I am usually able to express feelings that I wish to express.
2. ____ It is often difficult for me to control the actions that come from my feelings.
3. ____ I am more likely to face a problem than to avoid it.
4. ____ I often do things that I shouldn't to keep my friends from getting upset with me.
5. ____ I feel that I am working out an adult relationship with my parents.
6. ____ I resent being told what to do.
7. ____ I feel good about myself.
8. ____ I often feel a need to prove myself to others.
9. ____ I do ask for help when I need it.
10. ____ At this time, I am feeling pressure from different situations.
11. ____ My friends mean a lot to me.
12. ____ I do not make friends easily.
13. ____ I don't do everything that my friends expect me to do.
14. ____ I am not accepted by the group that I want to be accepted by.
15. ____ I express my love for others in a lot of different ways.
16. ____ I don't really know what "love" is.
17. ____ I don't expect everybody to like me.
18. ____ I feel worthless when others don't like me.
19. ____ I value my time alone.
20. ____ I feel lonely a lot of the time.
21. ____ I feel I will find a job or a career that I will like.
22. ____ I worry about what kind of job I will have.
23. ____ I feel that I think through my problems as they come along.
24. ____ I have a difficult time making decisions.

(This worksheet was adopted from On the Level series)

This worksheet is for use with the "ME in Mental Health" Program, © 1983, Mental Health Association

WORKSHEET # 3

FRIENDS

Which of the following would you do to be popular with friends?

	YES	NO	MAYBE
Tell a lie about a friend.			
Let your friend cheat from your test paper.			
Do something you know is wrong or is against your parent's wishes.			
Pretend you have done something you didn't really do.			
Change the way you dress or act.			
Drop one friend because another friend thinks that you should.			
Pass on a rumor about someone even if you know it is false.			
Play a prank on a classmate.			
Lie to another friend.			
Do homework for a friend.			
Shoplift.			

THOUGHTS:

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IN ORDER TO DEVELOP SELF-CONFIDENCE, YOU MUST LEARN TO MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM.

(Adapted from an activity from the filmstrip series, "Feeling Good About Yourself" Guidance Associates)

WORKSHEET # 4

EVALUATION

1. One thing I learned about myself from this program series was
2. How honest were you when you were sharing your ideas, feelings, thoughts, etc?
3. Is there something that you wished you had said or asked more about? If so, what?
4. I would like to spend more time on
5. I have changed my way of thinking about
6. Write down at least one reason why you are a special person

Comments:

HOORAY

FOR ME!

I am me.

I am a very special person.

I am unique, since there's no one else in the universe created just like me.

I will make goals for myself and will use my own ideas and talents to reach them.

I take the responsibility for my thoughts and for my actions and will try to make the best decisions for myself.

I will not change my values in order to "fit in" to what others think is important.

I will enjoy each day, making every minute count for good.

I will always hold onto my self-respect.

I will learn how to improve my self-image and will think about it every day.

I will remember that I am valuable and that I have worth.

Getting it together is life itself! I will get it together and will celebrate ME.

A Thought for Every Day:

What others think of me is important but what I think of myself is most important.

I will:

Set goals for myself which are within my capabilities.

Remember that there's a terrific human being inside of me, so I will aim at all times for my best.

Learn to postpone on "I want to" for on "I need to" in order to finish a neglected task.

Resolve to try again if I "goof."

Open doors for myself by learning new things.

Trust others, and be trustworthy myself.

Show I am important by following good health habits.

Spend some of my time helping others.

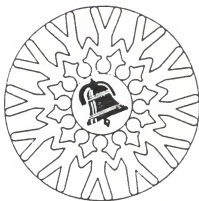
Mental Health Association
412 N.E. 16th Avenue, Room 145
Gainesville, Florida 32601
(904) 372-9809

"The one person you cannot avoid, no matter how hard you try, is you."

If you want to read more about self-esteem and feeling good about yourself, we suggest:

You Are Somebody Special by
C. Shedd

What Makes Me Feel This Way
by Eda LeShan



The design and initial printing of this pamphlet is made possible in part through gifts to the Mental Health Association in memory of Donna Rock.

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TEENAGERS

ARE....

Most parents of teenagers begin to feel at least a little concern over the changes that are going to take place in their children over the next few years. We hear stories and become more concerned. Fortunately, to quote Bruce Norrmore, the author of Adolescence is Not an Illness, "Adolescence is neither an illness nor a confirmed disaster area." However, it does require patience and understanding on both sides.

Probably one of the first things we can do as parents and teachers is to think back on our own adolescence. Were we happy and content through those years, or were there times when it was painfully difficult? We tend to forget those years so quickly. It is easy at this point in our lives to see our children's problems as minor or insignificant. However, we need to remind ourselves of the terrific pressure that teenagers are under these days, and the momentous decisions that they have to make. For example, when was the last time a friend tried to talk you into experimenting with drugs? When was the last time you had to struggle over how physically involved to become on a date? How long has it been since you had to decide what vocation to select? We can help a great deal by being sensitive to our teen's struggles and problems. On top of these very real struggles, they don't need to feel misunderstood and alone.

Some basics to consider:

Physical changes: These changes are so natural that we sometimes overlook the fact that they are the basis of most of the personality changes and problems that teens encounter.

Moods: Most teens do have significant changes of feelings and moods. One day they are on top of the world; the next day, that world has come to an end. These changes frustrate us "rational" adults, but we must be patient. Time, maturity, and parental understanding help to smooth out these ups and downs.

Peer pressure: Everyone, including adults, reacts to the influence of peers. In young teens, who are loosening the ties of home but aren't ready to take off alone, peers are especially important. Going against the group puts them in the middle of nowhere. As teens get older, they find more confidence in their own abilities and decision-making powers and less need for strong peer support.

Independence: We need to remember that our teens are neither children nor adults. They still lack the confidence and experience they will have as adults, but they can handle a lot of stress and accept many challenges. We must give them time to find their way to cope with life.

Self-esteem: The feelings of failure, alienation, loneliness, and lack of self-confidence are extremely common in adolescents. They don't know who they are yet. We can help them most by showing them that they are loved and valued.

Listening: By giving teens a chance to talk out their feelings without minimizing the seriousness of the problem or telling them how they should or should not feel, we communicate respect and understanding that will go a long way in helping them to understand themselves and find answers. They don't need our logic; they need understanding and acceptance.

Sensitivity: It is easy to joke and make fun at adolescents because they are going through a lot of things for the first time (dating, clumsiness, voice changes). However, each of these so called "little" things we joke about are not little to our teens and can make them feel uncomfortable and therefore resentful.

Limits and controls: Teens do need and want limits and controls, but power plays will no longer work. Wise parents will listen to their teens' wishes and try to understand their perspectives before setting rules and regulations. If we sit down with our teens and discuss the matter, try to understand their viewpoint as well as expressing our own, and then decide on an appropriate way of improving the situation, they will sense our love and concern and be much more likely to respond favorably.

All of these changes that adolescents are going through take a toll on their self-image. They are reevaluating themselves. It is vitally important that teens maintain or develop a strong sense of personal worth. This strength helps them to follow their own convictions, to base decisions on their feelings (not those of the group), and not to buckle under pressure. As parents, we cannot be with our children every minute as they grow, change, and make decisions. We can, however, make sure they know that they are loved, they matter, they belong, they have worth. This is probably the most important thing we can do for our children and the one thing that will have the most overall effect.

To quote Bruce Narromore once again, "Living with a teenager isn't always easy. But for that matter, neither is living with a parent!"

If you want to do some additional reading on teenagers and self-esteem, may we suggest:

Adolescence is Not an Illness by Bruce Narromore. An excellent book that is also fun to read. It covers all areas of adolescence.

Your Child's Self-Esteem by Dorothy Briggs. This book talks about the importance of self-esteem in children beginning at infancy. There is a section just about adolescents. An excellent book.

Mental Health Association
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HELPFUL HINTS FOR PARENTS OF TEENS

Too often we are so busy reminding our children of what they should and should not be doing or correcting them for something they did wrong, that we neglect to tell them that we are glad they are around, glad they are our children, and that they are indeed loved. Obviously, we all lose our temper occasionally, and those occasional negative statements won't hurt. However, a child, or anyone, who receives constant negative messages soon feels very worthless, because unless we are very secure and sure of who we are, we believe we are what people say.

There are numerous little things that we can say and do to let people know that they are valued. Below is a list of statements that are positive rewards for just being someone we care about and also for doing well. Some ideas to reinforce these words with actions and attitudes are also included. Try them on the other people in your life, too. We all need to be told that we are appreciated.

Positive rewards:

I'm lucky to know you!
You are important.
You are unique.
I value your opinion.
I like to be with you.
I'm glad you're here.
I think you are a neat person.
Thanks for being you.
I like the way you did that.
Your work is impressive.
You certainly are clever.

I hear you did a great job!
Thank you for being so patient.
I'm proud of the way you did that.
I appreciate your support.
I'm pleased at your improvement.

Ideas:

Respect your teens' ideas, wishes, likes and dislikes and, when reasonable, give teens the opportunity to choose options for themselves.

Allow teens to learn by doing, even though their choices and methods may be different from ours.

Admit that even as adults, we don't have all the answers and also make mistakes.

Accept the adolescent as a human being with feelings.

Allow adolescents their privacy. Don't invade their space uninvited.

Don't compare one youth to another. No two are ever the same - physically, mentally, or emotionally.

We cannot solve youth's problems or manipulate their growth. We can only provide conditions for growth - the warmth of caring, sharing and understanding.



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WHEN TO SEEK ADDITIONAL HELP

There is a rise in emotional and mental health problems during adolescence. The emotional upheavals often associated with adolescence may lead to such wide swings in behavior that it is often difficult to know whether a young person requires psychological treatment. However, we cannot always assume that the young person who is upset will necessarily just "grow out of his difficulties." There are times when professional help is needed. We often prefer to believe that if we ignore problems they will go away. However, they seldom do and often will be magnified instead. Therefore, we shouldn't hesitate to seek help if we have a problem in our family that we feel we cannot deal with. Even if the problem seems silly or insignificant, it is better to go to a therapist, counselor, minister, etc. and be told that we don't need to be there, than to let a problem become more severe.

Same things to watch for in our teens:

1. Declining school performance, especially if it's rather sudden and combined with expressions of apathy and helplessness.
2. An abrupt change in behavior, such as going from being quite active to social isolation, or erratic behavior not appropriate to a situation and not characteristic of a teen.
3. A marked change in sleeping or eating habits such as excessive sleepiness or loss of appetite.
4. Reactions to traumatic changes within the home such as: serious illness of family members, a move, loss of employment by one or both parents, divorce, loss of a loved one.
5. Lack of responsibility or misuse of drugs and alcohol - frequent use, lack of control and irrational behavior.

6. Depression: Pay attention if your teen mopes around, feels "down" all the time, doesn't have much energy, doesn't seem to enjoy life, or appears miserable all the time.
7. Poor self-image: Although it is normal to have doubts about self-image, an extremely poor self-image can be cause for concern. People who seem down on themselves all the time, who rarely seem to enjoy themselves, whose self-esteem and self-concept seem to be at a dangerously low ebb, could need help.
8. Hearing voices or seeing things: If someone tells you that they think people are following them or that they hear voices, seek help immediately.
9. Severe weight loss, especially when unnecessary, and when the teens still consider themselves too heavy.
10. Suicidal thoughts: Seek help IMMEDIATELY if teens talk about ending their lives or doing away with themselves. Any statements like these are danger signals: "I would be better off dead." "Life is not worth living." "I am hopeless and life will never change so I am going to go to sleep and never wake up." "I'll get even with you by killing myself."

Please keep in mind that the length, frequency, and intensity of any of these items is quite important. Don't be overly concerned if your teens show one or more of the first seven items during their teen years. The concern comes if the condition lasts for a period of time or seems severe.

If you need help:

Contact your doctor, minister, or friend who may be able to refer you to a trained professional.

Call your local mental health center and see what help is available.

Look in the phone book under: Mental Health Center, clinics, etc.

Don't let the cost scare you - there are places to go that charge a minimal rate. Insurance coverage may also be in effect; check your policy.

Don't let the fear of what "others" will think stop you. One out of every three families in America is affected by mental illness in one form or another.

Remember, we can't always solve all of our problems ourselves. It is unrealistic to expect that of ourselves or our teens.

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APPENDIX B
COMMUNICATIONS WITH COUNSELORS AND PRINCIPALS

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALACHUA COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL COUNSELORS
FROM: DOT THOMAS, SCHOOL COUNSELOR AT SPRING HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL
DATE: MAY 15, 1986

Thank you for agreeing to allow the research study "Effects of a Structured Classroom Group Guidance Unit on Seventh-Grade Students' Self-Concepts and Attitudes Toward School" to be conducted in your school. The project is scheduled for the beginning of the 1986-87 school year (September-October). Eight sessions (one per week) will be needed to conduct the study, thereby including adequate time for pretesting and posttesting. The study is to be conducted in two seventh-grade social studies classes (one as a treatment group and one as a control group) in each participating school. The school counselors, in their respective schools, have agreed to conduct the study.

Thank you for your support and cooperation with this project. If you have any questions or need additional information, I can be reached at Spring Hill Middle School (454-2701).

August 5, 1986

Dear Middle School Counselors,

Thank you for agreeing to help with the "Me in Mental Health" classroom guidance unit research project. Your participation and support of this study is greatly appreciated.

Attached you should find a copy of the "Experimental Procedures Summary" which identifies the steps to be followed in carrying out this project so that the research procedures will be consistent among the participating schools. In addition, you will receive a basket containing the Leader's Guide for the "Me in Mental Health" unit and the instructional materials needed to present this classroom guidance unit. The study is scheduled to be conducted during the weeks of September 2, 1986, through October 17, 1986. The intervention allows for one classroom guidance session per week for six weeks. You should also find testing materials (Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale and School Attitude Measure) for pre- and posttesting the treatment and control groups. You will need to allow two additional sessions for collecting the evaluation data.

Thank you again for your cooperation. Please call me at 454-2701 (school) or 373-1066 (home) if you have any questions or need additional information.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dot Thomas".

Dot Thomas, School Counselor
Spring Hill Middle School

Experimental Procedures Summary

This study will take place over a twelve week period. The following timelines and procedures will be followed:

1. During the month of August, 1986, the researcher will survey the Alachua County middle school counselors and identify those willing to participate in the study.

2. The participating school counselors will be invited to attend an orientation/training session in August. Prior to the meeting, the school counselors will be asked to interview the seventh-grade social studies teachers in their respective schools to generate a pool of potential participating social studies classroom groups. Drawings will be held during the meeting to determine the experimental and control groups for each school.

3. During the orientation/training session, timelines and procedures will be explained to the participating school counselors and packets of the materials will be distributed. The "Me in Mental Health" unit will be presented and opportunities for discussion and practice will be provided.

4. The middle school counselors will return to their respective schools and obtain parent and administrator approval if necessary. The seventh-grade social studies teachers will be informed regarding the classes selected for participation in the study.

5. The seventh-grade social studies classes selected for the treatment groups will be informed about the study.

6. Classroom group meeting dates will be arranged with the teachers of the treatment groups. Classroom guidance sessions (one per week) will begin during the first week of September. Collection of evaluative data will be completed by the middle of October.

7. During the first and second sessions, all experimental and control groups will be pretested with the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (1969) and the School Attitude Measure (1980). Participating students will be tested in the same groups and the same area that they were assigned for treatment. Control groups will be tested during their regular social studies class periods and in the areas where the classes normally meet. Assessment of the control groups will occur during the same week as the treatment group evaluation. The middle school counselors who led the experimental groups will conduct the assessment and will administer the instruments as designed. Posttesting will occur during the seventh and eighth sessions using the same instruments as the pretest sessions.

8. The assessment data will be collected by the participating middle school counselors and returned to the researcher who will be responsible for organizing and analyzing the data.

9. The participating middle school counselors will provide class listings of the treatment and control groups indicating the name of the participating school as well as gender and race of the participants.

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALACHUA COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELORS
FROM: DOT THOMAS--SPRING HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL
DATE: AUGUST 11, 1986

The implementation date of the "Me in Mental Health" unit for seventh-grade students is scheduled for the beginning of the 1986-87 school year. That time is here so I hope all of you are ready to get going with the project.

You should already have the necessary materials for the project except for the filmstrips and test materials (I have these and will give them to you at our meeting). You should find a revised checklist of activities attached which will be helpful to you as you begin making plans for the year. Data will be collected from the four inner-city middle schools (Westwood, Bishop, Lincoln, and Ft. Clarke).

TIME is of utmost importance in getting the data collected; thus, those schools who are involved in the data collection need to begin as soon as school starts. Remember you need only one treatment group and one control group in each school for the data collection.

Students will be pretested during the second week of school (please send these results to me as soon as you get them!) and identify which group is which. As you can tell, I am anxious to get this project underway and completed! Let's shoot for October 17 to have the posttesting data completed and returned.

COUNSELOR CHECKLIST

"THE ME IN MENTAL HEALTH" UNIT

OVERVIEW AND MODIFICATIONS

A. PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES:

- _____ Identify treatment and control groups in your school.
- _____ Schedule eight classroom group guidance sessions with the treatment groups--2 during the first weeks for data gathering (pretest) and one session each week after that.
- _____ Schedule four sessions with the control groups for data collection purposes (these should be scheduled to coincide with the testing dates of the treatment group--at the beginning and ending of the sessions).
- _____ REVIEW LEADERS GUIDE (note changes made last Spring).

B. OVERVIEW/MODIFICATION OF ACTIVITIES:

DAY 1

Introduction

Administer the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale to treatment and control (students will write in the booklets)

DAY 2

Administer the School Attitude Measure to treatment and control groups (students will use an answer sheet and #2 pencil)

DAY 3

Brief introduction
Filmstrip (Part I)
Student Handout (You Are Special)
Discussion questions
Thought for the Day

DAY 4

Activity 1--Feelings
Activity 2--More on Feelings (small groups)
Worksheet #1 (may have to discuss the next day)
Thought for the Day

DAY 5

Activity 3--How do you see yourself?
Worksheet #2
Activity 4--Strengths and Limitations
Thought for the Day

DAY 6

Activity 5--PEER Groups
Discussion questions (small groups)
Worksheet #3
Positive Feedback Activity (In small groups, have students write a positive statement about each student in their group on the enclosed labels and stick them on each student's card.)
Thought for the Day

DAY 7

Filmstrip (Part II)
Administer the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale (use test booklets--need student name [first name, last initial] race, and sex)

DAY 8

Administer the School Attitude Measure (use answer sheets--need students' name [first name, last initial], race, and sex)
Activity 7--Worksheet #4--Unit Evaluation
Student Handout--"Hooray for Me"
Parent Pamphlets (3)--send home
Thought for the Day
Thank students for participating

FINAL ACTIVITIES:

- _____ Compile class list (alphabetically) indicating sex and race of each student (one for treatment group and control group).
- _____ Thank participating teachers.
- _____ Package class list, collected data, and test materials and return to Dot Thomas by October 17 (Please go ahead and send the pretest data to me as soon as it is ready!).
- _____ Call Dot (454-2701) for additional information or to make other arrangements.

MANY, MANY THANKS TO ALL OF YOU!!!!!!

TIME LINE

WEEK 1	Aug. 18-22	Preplanning--identify classes and schedule sessions
2	Aug. 25-29	1st week of school (August 28, The "Me in Mental Health" Orientation/Training Session for Middle School Counselors)
3	Sept. 2-5	2nd week of school--Pretest treatment and control groups
4	Sept. 8-12	3rd week of school--Pretest treatment and control groups
5	Sept. 15-19	Begin unit sessions
6	Sept. 22-26	Continue unit
7	Sept. 29- Oct. 3	Continue unit
8	Oct. 6-10	Continue unit
9	Oct. 13-17	Continue unit--begin posttesting treatment and control groups
10	Oct. 20-24	Posttest and return results to Dot.

THANKS FOR ALL OF YOUR HELP AND COOPERATION!!!!

(call me at 454-2701 if you have any questions)

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dorothy (Dot) Lou Witt Thomas was born in Alachua County, Florida. She is the daughter of Hazel and Leroy Witt. She has one brother, Delroy Witt, and is married to Don R. Thomas. Dot attended public schools in the Alachua County School District and graduated from Santa Fe High School in 1958. During the summer of 1959, she enrolled at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. She graduated in June, 1963, with a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education degree. Dot taught physical education at Stephen Foster Elementary School and Santa Fe High School in Alachua County. In 1968, she received a Master of Education degree in guidance and counseling from the University of Florida. Dot served as a school counselor at Newberry Junior-Senior High School and is currently employed as a school counselor at Spring Hill Middle School in High Springs, Florida. She also was awarded a Specialist in Education degree from the Department of Counselor Education, University of Florida, in 1979. Dot has continued to pursue education in counselor education and expects to receive a Doctor of Philosophy degree in May, 1987.

As an active member and leader in professional association activities, Dot has served as Middle/Junior High School Vice-President, President-Elect, President, and Past President of the Florida School Counselor Association and a member of the Florida

Association for Counseling and Development Governing Board. She also has served as President-Elect, President, and Past President of the American School Counselor Association and as a member of the American Association for Counseling and Development Governing Council. Dot has been a member of numerous local, state, and national committees, served as a consultant to several school districts, and made numerous presentations at workshops, conferences, and professional meetings throughout the country.

Dot is a member of the Phi Delta Kappa and Chi Sigma Iota honoraries, the Florida School Counselor Association, the Florida Association for Counseling and Development, the American School Counselor Association, the American Association for Counseling and Development, the Alachua County Education Association Executive Council, and the Alachua County Mental Health Association. Recently, Dot was elected President-Elect of the American Association for Counseling and Development.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



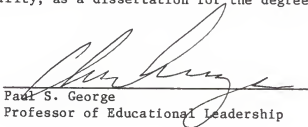
Paul W. Fitzgerald, Chairman
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Larry C. Loesch
Professor of Counselor Education

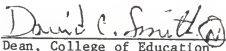
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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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